

TOPICA SACRA: Spiritual Logick:

SOME BRIEF

HINTS and HELPS

TO

FAITH, MEDITATION, PRAYER,
COMFORT and HOLINESS.

Communicated at *Christ-Church, DUBLIN.*

By THOMAS HARRISON, Minister of the
Gospel.

Enlarged with *SPIRITUAL PLEADINGS*, in
above Thirty CASES:

By Mr. JOHN HUNTER, Minister of the
Gospel at *Ayre.*

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY,
The Lord HENRY CROMWELL,
Lord Deputy of IRELAND.

May it please Your Excellency,

THE Reason why I suffer this Discourse to go abroad, and not some others, (though urged by Friends, yet commanded thereunto by Your Excellency and the Council) is partly to beg Pardon for that Disobedience, partly to evince, that it was no defect in my Will, but in my Notes and manner of Writing, that hindered me from paying that Observance, which now I yield; But especially, because the Spirit of God, (for mine own, or a worse, neither could, or would ever have done any such good office for me; I say therefore undoubtedly the Spirit of God) by these and the like Injections and Intimations, helping me to plead and press them, and to hold them up before the Lord, and to spread them before Him, as Hezekiah did the Letter, bath many a time sustained and cheered mine own Heart, and so renewed the face of that Earth after much Winter weather, after many Trials, Troubles, and Tremblings: for when God speaks, where are the Lips that will not quiver at his Voice? Into whose bones will not rottenness enter? and happy they, and they only, who now tremble in themselves, that they may rest in the Day of Trouble, Hab. 3. 16.

This, (not to mention any other ground) gives me some small glimmering of Hope, that the same powerful Spirit, may be pleased also, further to manage and improve the same Medium, to the relief and advantage of others: and (I can say it) it is Usefulness and Service that I have aimed at in this Enterprize.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Amongst all the Helps to Devotion that I have seen, (I mean Books so intitled, commonly containing some Forms of Prayers) I remember not any thing, at all of him to this Undertaking, which tends to help the Gift, not to stint the Spirit of Prayer, and only lays a few Sticks together, (pointing to the Wood where more may be had) which by His own Breath, he may be pleased to kindle.

Whatever Strangers, either in Plate or Affection may imagine, I know Your Excellency to be a Pleader, and (I hope) a Prevailer with God, daily.

I therefore offer this poor Essay unto You, not so much by way of Assistance, as of Acknowledgment that under God you have been and are the Instrumental cause of my enjoying a fullness of Opportunities, of doing some service in my Generation; the value whereof I desire daily to renew upon my Heart, above all the things that this World can afford, or brittle Mortality enjoy.

As it hath been Your Lordship's mercy, that hitherto you have had help from on High, to know and Love the Lord, His Name and Image wherever you discern it, and to walk acceptably with your God, and usefully to his People, for which you have your Record on High, your Witness amongst Men, and in your own Bosom: so it is now become your Obligation, and only Interest, still to be found in the same ways of Righteousness; wherein that you may persevere unto the End: and that your Path may be, as the shining Light, which shineth out more and more unto the perfect Day! That you, your most precious Consort and hopeful Children, may prove an inestimable Blessing in this World, and eternally Blessed in that to come, is, and shall be the daily Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Excellencies worthles

But most willing Servant;

THO. HARRISON.

To the Much Honoured,

SAMUEL MOOR, *Provost,*
DAVID FERGUSON, }
FRANCIS MURDOCH, } *Baillies,*
JOHN CRAUFORD, *Dean of Guild,*
THOMAS RICHARD, *Treasurer,*
WILLIAM M'GAN, *Deacon Conveener,*
And the Remanent Members of the Council of AYRE.

MUCH HONoured,

AS Ye have a right unto my work in the ministry, so there is nothing more just, than that I should dedicate this little Essay to you, both upon the account of the respects I owe you, and the tender concern for your Everlasting Interests, which I charge myself to entertain.

Some of your predecessors have made their Honour to shine with an incomparable Lustre, by familiarity with God, in which they were so eminent that it has embalmed their Names to all posterity; and procured from all the Good and Wise, the best Judges of Honour, a greater esteem for the place of their residence and Government, than even all its other advantages could claim.

Altho' the withered state of Religion, all ranks of men have fallen into this day, render the practice of these before our time to our apprehension inimitable, and the slothfulness of despair strikes us Dead, yet it becomes us to recal into our Memory their Noble Example, and ambition the imitation of it.

The principal mean left us in reserve is Prayer, and indeed we can never either learn the art of it, nor practise it sufficiently. The Apostle when he is concluding his directory to the Ephesians about the spiritual Armour, adds praying with all prayer and supplication, &c. signifying that as we must cut our way through to Heaven, so fighting on knees, and calling for help is the best method for assured success,

[Place this Dedication before p. 91.]

The Epistle Dedicatory.

cess, as it is usual with Nations engaged in War, to call for and make a confederacy with others for auxiliary Forces against the Enemy, that without this might be too strong: These who have well understood this exercise, have done wonderful things, stormed Heaven, and got what they pleased: It was said of Luther, O! what Spirit, what Faith was in his words? he made his request with the reverence that was suitable to God, but with so great confidence and assurance, as convinced us he thought he spake with a Friend, a Father: In his Prayers he urged the promises in the Psalms, as one who was sure all should come to pass that he sought.

Let me commend this noble employment unto you, or speak well of it before you. It hath the good report of the Living and the Dead, and hath been kind to all them in Heaven, and who are going to it will attest this, it hath been often-times to them as Goliath's Sword to David, none like it. I know nothing better, either for attaining or maintaining a frame of live-lines, for often by hammering on our own hearts (when we could do no other thing) we have wrought a softness into such hard Metals: so as they could be poured out before the Lord.

And O! how natively doth Heavenliness vent itself in exclamations of Prayer, both petitions and acknowledgements? This is it which gives a wonderful seasoning to our spirits, in the more prosperous circumstances of Life, and proves a wind that blows the Vessel toward the fair Havens, and when the Heart is oppress'd with grief, 'tis in this it vents its trouble, and by doing so gets ease, for we must either have strong hands of resolution, to strangle our trouble within, or must impart it, and when we communicate it unto God, the weight of it is in a great measure gone. It is by this that what in a man unacquainted with God, is but like the groan of a beast in pain, becomes a breathing after God, and crying to Heaven for help in the believer. Could we always keep up a disposition for it, it would keep us up in all cases.

Let us endeavour to keep a constant tenderness of affections, by a sense of God and of ourselves, in our guilt, need, and liability to trouble dwelling deep on our spirits, and let no breathing of the spirit allowed, even when we are not at
all

The Epistle Dedicatory.

all waiting for it, be neglected; but rather let all the impressions be at any time makes on our souls, be fed, nourished, and improv'd by carrying them unto God in prayer, which would at once both enlarge, and establish them there.

With an eye to the people of my charge I have compiled this little Essay, and I could not but think it proper, that since I am appointed to be an assistant to them in their public devotion, I should set something before them to that purpose, which might be of more constant use, and so improve both their eyes and ears as instruments of promoting seriousness in Religion.

That ye may be exemplary in all the duties of your profession and your Special Character, that ye may have success in the management of the Government committed to you, and that thereby you may deserve and have all the respect due to Honour and Religion meeting in one, that these may make the Influence of your example work more forcibly, and that ye may be happy in both worlds, shall be the Prayer of,

Much Honoured,

Your most Humble and obliged

Servant in the Lord,

JOHN HUNTER.

Spiritual

THE
P R E F A C E
To this EDITION.

Christian Reader,

I Here offer thee one of the sweetest Cordials for a distressed Soul, that ever I saw wrote by an uninspired Pen. The Author's Design is to keep thee in thy Addresses to the Throne of Grace; and he has indeed excellently hit his Mark: He has here mentioned many Things that are Causes of Distress, and frequently of Dejection, to exercised Souls; in which Cases he has afforded thee many suitable Petitions and Considerations, that by the Blessing of God, will be of excellent Use, to strengthen thy Faith, and help to give thee Boldness at the Throne of Grace.

But it must be owned, the Author (who seems to have lived near to God, and to have had much of the Gift of Prayer, and the Help of the Spirit in that Duty) has some very strong Expressions, which ordinary Christians (especially in times of Dejection) will not be able to use. I would therefore (if Need be) advise thee, to change such Expressions, which may be done without marring their Usefulness. For Instance, when the Author says, ask him. This a poor discouraged Soul may think too bold an Expression, and so dare not make use of it. As in Page 15. Ask him, if he hath not been found of many a Soul that sought him not? This Expression which occurs often through the Book, may be changed thus: Consider with thyself, or in thine own Mind, if he hath not been found of many a Soul that sought him not. So Page 16. Tell him, that it is in Order to practice, that thou would'st be acquainted with him. Thou mayest change this the same way, namely, consider with thyself, if it be not really in order

P R E F A C E.

der to practice, that thou wouldst desire to be acquainted with him. And from this Consideration, thy Faith may be strengthened, and thou mayest obtain Boldness at the Throne of Grace.

Thus these strong and bold-like Expressions may easily be suited to the ease and liking of weak Christians, seeing the Design of Prayer is not to move the unchangeable God to alter his Purposes; but to change our own Minds, to beat down our Unbelief, and draw forth the Graces of the Spirit into a lively Exercise. For which Purpose there are many excellent Sentences in this Book. Neither is the Design of Prayer to prevail with God, by our Entreaties, (as we prevail with our Neighbour, by Arguments and Entreaties) to supply our Wants, and give us good Things; for he is a liberal Giver, and always ready to supply the Wants of his People, and to give them more than they ask. But the Design of Prayer is to qualify us for receiving good Things, by bringing us to a Sense of our Need, and a Dependence upon his Mercy, and Faithfulness for the Supply of our Wants, according to his gracious Promises.

But this does not at all remove the Necessity of Prayer, nor if rightly understood, can it afford the least Discouragement to the Performance of that Duty. For God has commanded us to pray, *Phil.* 4. 6. 1 *Thes.* 5. 17. And wherever God prepares the Heart to pray, he will cause his Ear to hear, *Psal.* 10. 17. Neither has he bid us seek him in vain, *Isa.* 45. 19. Prayer is a very solemn Part of divine Worship, which God claims as due from us: and those who duly perform it, he will in the end tune their Hearts for Praises, and fill their Mouths with Songs of Joy: which that every Reader of this Book may find from comfortable Experience, is the Prayer of

Thy Soul's Well-wisher.

Lemmata Casuum.

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Topica

Topica Sacra ;

Spiritual Logick.

J O B xxiii. 3, 4.

O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat !

I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with Arguments.

HOLY Job, poor now, even to a Proverb, and miserable to a Prodigy, perceiving his friends Discourses were fuller of *Reproaches* than *Consolations*, neglects to answer them, and resolves to get him to God, the only Support and Refuge of the miserable.

And thus he entertains himself in the second verse, even to day, after all that hath been said, the bitterness of my complaint is rather increased than allayed ; wherefore no wonder my mouth is always open to breathe out complaints ; and the more I complain, the more I suffer from you, (so some) or rather from God himself, whose hand I acknowledge in all these strokes ; and let me complain as long as I will, my tongue is not so *eloquent* in complaining as his hand is heavy that strikes me ; my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

And yet for all this, *verse 3.* he sighs after a Treaty, after a nearer access and approach unto him that smites him ; he quits his seeming *Friends* to make after his seeming *Enemy*, and is willing to make this enemy his *Judge*, and to refer all to him.

And then, verse 4. He thinks with himself how he would manage his matters, how he would bestir himself, and not lose his cause for want of pleading, could he but get a day of hearing; I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with Arguments.

Some think he wishes for a Guide, a Friend to help him to such an opportunity. *Quis det nossem* (saith *Drusus*) *quis mihi tribuat ut cognoscam* (saith *the Vulgar*) *quis dabit scirem* (saith *Montanus*) *quis est qui possit facere ut valeam accedere* (saith *the Syriac*) he would fain find an Angel to conduct him to the Throne of God (saith *Senault*) or rather the Angel of the Covenant to afford him that *προσάγωγὴ* that *Manuduction* which the Apostle speaks of, as the known privilege of all Believers, who through him *have an access by one Spirit unto the Father*, Eph. ii. 18.

But not to darken the words instead of explaining them, by giving the various readings and opinions of Interpreters, I will draw out some observations, and hasten to that I desire to insist on.

Observ. 1. The forest stroaks cannot drive away good souls from God, but rather draw them nearer to him. My stroak is heavier than my groaning; yet O that I knew where I might find him!

2. God himself, even for his own sake, is the great Object of a Saint's seekings. O that I knew where I might find him! not this or that to be gotten by him.

3. Precious souls that have a large *Interest* in God, are sometimes at a loss, as to his sweet and sensible *Presence*; the great God hath his unknown *Retreats*, whither his best friends cannot follow him. So verse 8, 9. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.* So holy *David*, Psal. lxi. 1. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. You see his *Interest* is clear; he can say thou art my God, and yet he had but little enjoyment of him: his soul thirsteth, longeth, followeth hard after him, ver. 8. Such another sigh ye have, Psal. ci.

2. O when wilt thou come unto me? Do not conclude ye have

have no interest, because ye have little enjoyment ; no Union, because ye want Vision.

4. A gracious heart seldom or never thinks itself near enough unto God, its Sun and Shield, and Center : *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat !*

5. God's Judgment-seat where he sits to hear and determine causes, is not terrible and unapproachable to a Believer, who knows it to be a Throne of Mercy, as *Job* here did ; for, says he, *ver. 6.* how would he use me, if he had me there ? would he overwhelm me with his greatness ? will he plead against me with his absolute Power ? No ; but he would put strength in me : Happy are all that can say so, for we must all appear there, *2 Cor. v. 10, 11.* and it will be terrible to all those that do not often resort thither afore-hand.

6. A poor afflicted creature often thinks he hath a great deal to say unto God, if he could but get an hearing ; he thinks how he would order and argue out the matter : what a story he would tell him, if he could but get his ear, and gain access and audience from him.

7. It's good to have our hearts and mouths fill'd with Arguments when we come to plead and expostulate, and reason out our great concernments with our God.

This is the point I pitch on, to expel that spirit of slumber, which hath so much weakned the spirit of Prayer in our days, that comparatively they are but little enriched by it, who trade to Heaven with it, where God hath all good things lying ready by him, and waiting only for Prayer to come and fetch them away.

When Christ himself would give us a perfect Pattern of Prayer, both for matter and manner, he winds and wraps up all with a conclusion, *Mat. vi. 13.* consisting of certain reasons to persuade God to hear our prayers, or at least to persuade and assure ourselves, that he doth and will hear them ; the reasons have an influence into all and every one of the Petitions ; *Thine is the Kingdom ;* and therefore we expect that as a good King thou shouldst receive and answer our Petitions : it is thy concernment as a King to have thine honour advanced,

therefore hallow thine own name, glorify it in the Church, let thy Kingdom come to it, advance thy Will in it, sustain us thy Subjects, pardon our sins, keep and defend us from Evils.

So *Thine is the Power*, which Kings often times want; but thou art able to exalt thine own name, to extend thy Kingdom over all, to fit us to do thy will, to minister to our necessities, to pardon our sins, to preserve us from all Evils.

And thine is the Glory; The hallowing of thy Name is the chief part of thy glory; and thy Kingdom the prime place of thy glory; herein art thou glorified; when we obey thy Will, when thou providest for thy people, forgivest their sins, preservest and deliverest them from their Enemies; therefore do thou all these things for us; therefore do we trust and hope that thou wilt do all these things for us.

Thus our blessed Saviour doth *direct* us, and thus the blessed Saints have *practised* in all Ages.

When the people of *Israel* had made the molten Calf, and committed Idolatry with it, and God was about to destroy them for it, see how *Moses* in his prayer for them lays hold on the avenging hand of God, and stays it by *reasoning* and *arguing*, from the dishonour that would redound unto God if he should destroy them; and from the *Covenant* that he had made with their fathers, *Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13, &c.* And *Moses* besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of *Egypt* with great power and with a mighty hand? (thou art now greatly engaged in the business) the *Egyptians* will slander thy gracious *Intentions*, and say it was for mischief with a purpose to slay and consume them. Remember *Abraham, Isaac* and *Israel* thy servants, to whom thou sweardest by thine own self that thou wouldst deal otherwise with their Posterity: and see how he prevails, *ver. 14.* The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. So when he would have destroyed them for murmuring, *Moses* interposeth again for a pardon, and fills his mouth with *Arguments*, *Numb. xiv.*

13, &c. The *Egyptians* will hear it, and they'll tell stories of thee to the Inhabitants of this Land, and they'll *slander thy Power*, and say, because thou wast not able to carry them any further, thou didst rid thy hands of them in the Wilderness: Now therefore I beseech thee, shew what thou canst do, put forth the greatness of thy power in pardoning, as thou hast spoken of thy self, and as thou hast practised hitherto in forgiving this people from *Egypt* even until now. And see how he carries it again, *ver. 20.* *The Lord said I have pardoned according to thy word.*

So *Abraham*, before him, *Gen. xviii. 23, 24, 25.* *Wilt thou also destroy the Righteous with the wicked? that be far from thee to do;* after this manner to slay (*pell mell*) the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee; shall not the *Judge* of all the earth do right? And you know how he shrunk up and narrowed the number, till he thought he had got within the verge of *Lot's Family*, and expected that should afford so many righteous persons as he named; but he was out in his charitable *conjecture*; otherwise he had not fail'd in what he pleaded for. He gained ground at every advance, and God yielded till *Abraham* thought he had *Enough*, and so pressed him no further.

Thus *Joshua* when the people were smitten at *Ai*, *Josh. vii. 7, 8, 9.* *Alas, O Lord God, says he, wherefore hast thou at all brought us over Jordan? or was it our Ambition and Covetousness that brought us over?* would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side *Jordan*. O Lord God, what shall I say when *Israel* that (used to be victorious) turneth their backs before their enemies! and now they'll all hear of it and environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and if that were the worst, it were no great matter; but what wilt thou do unto thy great Name? that will hardly swim if ours sink, they are so twisted together, so embarked in the same bottom; and though *Ours* be Vile, That's Precious; though *ours* deserve to rot, what hath that deserved? and think what thou art about to do to thy great Name. Thus *Hezekiah* in his sickness,

Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3. Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth: I have had an Honest heart towards thee, thou knowest it; and must I now be cut off untimely? when all things are so unsettled now or never is the time for thee to give Testimony to my sincerity; and you know he had a Reprieve presently brought him.

Thus he argues in his distress because of *Senacherib*, 2 Kings xix. 15, &c. *They have indeed made work with the gods of the Nations, and cast them into the fire, because they were no Gods; but now that they come to meddle with thee and thy people, let them find it too hot for them, and let all the Kingdoms of the earth know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.*

Thus *Asa*, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. *O Lord our God, we rest on thee, thou art our God, let no man prevail against thee.*

Thus *Jehosaphat*, 2 Chron. xx. 6, &c.

Thus *Daniel*, Chap. ix. to the 20th ver. &c. Thus *Amos* Chap. vii. ver. 2, 3. 5, 6.

Thus the Apostles, *Acts* iv. ver. 24, to 31.

Not that God stands in need of our informing him concerning our necessities, which He knows better than we; but because hereby we give some proof that we are not altogether strangers at home (as many careless ones are) but know something of our selves, and our own cases, and of Him and his dealings towards us: But I will give no other grounds for the point, than those of *Job's* resolution for this practice, and they are these.

1. Upon earnest arguing God will undoubtedly answer some way or other; that's implied, ver. 5. *I know the words that he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.* An answer I may be sure of when I fill my mouth with arguments; he will not sit still and say nothing; he will not sit like an Image, like a dumb Idol, as the Abominations of the Heathens, their *Dii Stercorei*, their dunghill-gods (as they are called, *Deut. xxix. 17.*) must of necessity do; they can do no otherwise, though men fill their mouths with Arguments, and empty their veins of their blood before them, 1 Kings xviii. 28.

No says *Job*, he will undoubtedly *answer* could I but have my fill of pleading; and I might guess at his designs by his answers (which are now too wonderful for me) I might understand what meaneth the heat of this great Burning, and wherefore he *contendeth* with me, and what he Means and *intends* towards his poor creature.

Arguments then in prayer are not likely to go unanswered, and praying Souls find it so.

Sometimes he answers *gloriously* from his secret place of Thunder, yet not in Thunder but in Lightning, in some glorious irradiation, in some precious melting *Promise* born in upon the heart with a strong hand, and there Engraven in indelible Characters by an irresistible power, whereof gracious souls in our days have had abundant experience.

Sometimes he answers in some *secret support* only, as *Hannah* after her arguing and pouring forth her sorrowful Soul into his Bosom, when she had left her petition in his *hand*, or but laid it down at his *feet*; though she had no other Answer than what was written on her heart by an invisible finger, yet she went her way well paid, and fell to her meat, and her countenance was no more sad, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18.

And surely one or the other of these made *David* close up so many Psalms with Praises and Rejoicings, which he had begun with tears and mourning; an obvious observation, and clear evidence that even whilst he was on his knees before the Lord, the wind came about and blew upon him out of a warm corner, and made all his *spices flow*.

Sometimes God answers in some *providential dispensations*, which both *gratify* us for the present, and might *instruct* us for the future; for many, very many Providences are *Prophetical*, and do foreshew things to come; but the language of Prophecies is for the most part *obscure*, and we seldom understand it, till God interpret it in the accomplishment; an Instance whereof we have in *Acts* 7. 25. *Moses* his defending the *Israelite*, and avenging him that was oppressed, and smiting the *Egyptian*, had a further reach, drift and scope in it,

than barely that present vindication : for he supposed his Brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not : no more do we many times the full *Extent* and *Import* of a dispensation which echoes to Prayers ; yet for the most part we pick something out of it to stay the stomach, and to afford support, if not satisfaction.

Plead then, and fill your Mouths with *Arguments* ; for whenever you do so, beyond all peradventure God will answer.

Secondly, There's no fear that he will interpret this sawciness and presumption in thee, and so answer thee with his Fists about thine ears, or with his foot to kick thee out of his presence ; there is no fear that he will smother thee under the weight of his Greatness, or dazzle thee with his beams, or burn thee with his flames, or drive thee from the Judgment seat (as Gallio did the Jews, *Acts* 18. 16.) No he never beats his people lower than their knees, and thence suffers them, yea helps them to rise again ; nay he will lay his hand upon thy head, yea under thy feet to do thee good ; He will stroke rather than strike a pleading Soul ; He will strengthen Thee, and put Metal into Thee ; this is Job's consideration in the sixth verse, Will he plead against me with his great and absolute Power, by which he may do what he pleaseth with his poor Creatures ? Will he serve me so ? No, but he would put strength in me : Thus he dealt with Daniel, Chap. 10. 19.

Thirdly, There the Righteous may plead and dispute with him even at the Bar of Equity and Justice, yea and the Judge cannot but pronounce and pass sentence in their favour ; that's his encouragement, *verse* 7. there the Righteous may plead with him, and so shall I be delivered for ever from my Judge, never more dread him as a Judge, but so as withal to love him, and live with him as a Father.

There righteous Jeremy pleads with him, *Jer.* 12. 1, &c. Righteous art thou O Lord, when I plead with thee : (there's no question to be made of that, that admits of no dispute, yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments.

There

There he invites his people to come and plead freely, *Isa. 43. 26. Put me in remembrance, let us plead together, declare thou that thou mayest be justified. If thou hast any thing to say for thy self, say on.*

Nay even Idolaters shall have this fair play, permission to plead for themselves, and for their dumb Idols too, if they have any thing to say for them, *Isa. 41. 21. Produce your Cause saith the Lord, bring forth your strong Reasons, saith the King of Jacob.* Have Idolaters this Liberty, and not the true Worshipers that worship in Spirit and Truth? The *Wicked* shall they have it, and not the *Righteous*? Yes doubtless, this is that *ταρξηνία*, (translated boldness of speech, *2 Cor. 7. 4.*) mentioned as the great privilege of the Saints, especially now under the New Testament, *Heb. 10. 19, &c. ἔχοντες οὖν, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν ἰσσοδὸν*, having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (a Right and Freedom to enter in our persons hereafter, and now by our prayers) let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith.

Object 1. But may some say, There the *righteous* indeed may plead with him, and not be cast in their suit; But where are those *righteous* Ones? And who are they? for it is not so with me: God be merciful to me a grievous sinner; I dare not be so bold with him; *Iniquity* must stop my mouth.

Answer. I answer, Every one that hath a share in, yea a sincere desire after the Righteousness of Christ, is *righteous* before him, and may in that Righteousness Plead and Prevail, and as a Prince have Power with God; For this is his own *Righteousness*, of his own Contrivance and Appointment: *The Righteousness which is of God by Faith*, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* A Righteousness Spun and Woven out of his own bowels, and the obedience of his dear Son; a better than ever came upon the back of Angels, for which the personal and legal Righteousness of a *Paul*, of an Angel, is to be abandoned; *Evangelical* being far better than *Angelical* Righteousness. 'Tis said, when *Pilate* appeared in Christ's Garment which he had got from the Soldiers, *Cæsar* could never be angry with him; 'tis certain thou canst not

miss a Blessing in his Garments, who is not ashamed to be called thine Elder Brother, who came to change *cloaths* and *places* with thee, and to take all upon himself, that thou mightest escape. The Father cannot but be well pleased with the smell of his Son's raiment; and he sits too upon a seat of *Judgment*, and must do thee Right; and Justice itself (which will not be twice paid) is as much for thee, as much thy friend as Mercy, *Rom. 3. 26. He is Just, and yet (nay therefore) a Justifier of him that believeth on Jesus.* So that if thou art shut up in unbelief, if there be but the least spark of true Faith alive in thy heart, thou mayest plead and prosper.

Object. 2. But I have nothing to say for myself; my heart is dried up like a Potsheard, and withered like grass. I have sinned away all arguments, and must never open my Mouth any more before him.

Answer. 1. True, not to Boast, but to Plead thou mayest.

2. And hast thou nothing to offer? not a sigh? not the groanings of thy Soul? this was *Job's* preface, *ver. 2.* My stroke is heavier than my groaning. O that I knew where I might find him! where the heart is full as *Job's* was (you may perceive it by his sighing) the Mouth will not be empty; a full heart will fill the mouth some way or other; if the heart be full of affection, the mouth will be full of arguments. They deceive their own souls who say their Hearts are as Good as the best (they thank God) though they make no shew, when neither God nor men can hear ought that's good come from them. *Psal. 37. 30. The mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom; and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.* Why so? *Ver. 31. The Law of his God is in his heart;* that sets his tongue a going the right way; and on the contrary, some mens stinking breath bewrays their inward parts to be very rottenness; they have not so much sweet breath as to make a sigh of; if the want of words were all, it were a small matter; that inarticulate Language of sighs and groans is powerful Rhetoric: Let the sighing of the Prisoners come before thee (saith David, *Psal. 79. 11.*) according to the Greatness of

thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die: And for the oppression of the Poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, (saith the Lord himself, Psal. 12. 5.) I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. We own help from the Spirit, when we are enlarged. Paul saith, he helps us, even when we are straitned; likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; (no not Paul and the Apostles) but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26. στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις with unutterable straitnings; our Enlargements may be but the *flowings* of the Gifts of the Spirit; but our inward pinchings and *coarctations* may be the *Intercession* of the Spirit itself; the more immediate operations of the Spirit. And we forget that there is such a Prompter behind the hangings; such an Interpreter, John 14. 26. (as his Title signifies, as well as Comforter; yea therefore a Comforter, because an Interpreter) to make known the mind of God to us, and ours to him; and as he *betrays* the secrets of God to the Saints, so he *rips* up their hearts before God (without doing any wrong, either in the one or other) and 'tis he who fills their mouths not only with windy words, but weighty *Arguments*.

3. Hast thou nothing to complain of to thy Judge? no Sin, no Devil, no Diabolical Temptations, no Superdiabolical corruptions, no spiritual Plunderers, no Egyptian Task-masters, no cruel Bondage that makes thy life bitter to thee? no Enemy coming in as a flood to oppress and do thee wrong? no Iron yolk that galls thy shoulders? no Violence and Spoil to cry out and complain of? Sure thou hast not *studied* thine own case; thou hast not *ordered* thy cause aright, if this fountain fail thee.

But will this be admitted? may the poor soul say; all *Complaints* are troublesome, men cannot endure them. I Answer, God will. Out of the abundance of my Complaint and Grief have I spoken hitherto, says Hannah, 1 Sam. 1. 16. and you know how she sped.

Nay the word rendered *Arguments*, I find by the Latin Interpreters rendred *Redargutionibus*, *Increpationibus*.

Job

Job in some case is *Defendant*, as to the Charges drawn up against him by his friends; but here he is *Plaintiff* also; could I come near the Bar, (says he) I would make my *moan*: the whole Court of Heaven should ring out and be made sensible of my sufferings.

But we are well enough with our *English* translation of the word, and it is warranted by the best Criticks; the word signifying all proceedings, all *arguments*, and Reasons used in a cause, by either Party, and contains all that can be *alleged* or urged by a poor creature any way in his own defence, or for his advantage.

4. There are some Arguments yet in *Archivis*, in the Rolls and Records of heaven which were never yet imbezled; they lie in the Ark of the Covenant, hid with Christ in God, (under double lock and key,) where neither *Moth nor Rust can come to corrupt, nor Thief break through to steal*; yea they lie (many of them) in the very heart and bosom, and Being of God himself. I hope we shall meet with some of them anon, and that they may meet with the very case of thy soul, and that thy soul may meet with God in the making use of them.

Object. 3. But what will Arguments work upon God? that King Eternal is not swayed but by Eternal considerations; He knows no motives but his own bowels, and the Merits and Mediation of his Son and Spirit.

Answer. 1. 'Tis true, and well for thee and me that 'tis so; otherwise Time-accidents and Time-exacerbations, had long e're this hurried us into a woful Eternity! past all relief, by way of Argumentation; hell, not Heaven, had been filled with our complainings!

2. Hath he not given thee those two great friends of his for thine Advocates? the one at his own right hand in Heaven moving and negotiating, and always appearing for thee; the *other* seated in thy breast, (though once a Cage for every unclean and hateful Bird) the Dove alights and abides upon that dunghil, and will not be frayed away: and the voice of that *Turtle* is heard in our Land; yea the Father's *own heart* is full of love, brim-full and running over upon thee; and this continually

continually *pleads* for thee, and makes all thine arrows which fly upwards, inevitable, not one is shot in vain.

3. Good Arguments in Prayer do shew the *necessity* of Prayer, and great *equity* for obtaining the things prayed for; and so do very much confirm our Faith, and fire our affections, and enable a man to break through many Discouragements, which Satan or his own heart may cast in to hinder Prayer: and certainly though there be no need of Arguments to work upon God, there is to work upon us; though not to *move* his love, yet to *remove* our unbelief; though not to prevail upon him to give, yet to prepare our selves to receive Mercy.

USE. The only *Use* I shall make of the Point, shall be to press all to make use of it, to put it in Practice daily; it will please your Heavenly Father very well; He loves to hear his Children Reason it out with him, and he doth of set purpose delay to grant their Requests sometimes, because he loves to hear often from them, to hear their Voices, and see their Faces; *Cant. 2. 14.* He loves to hear what they can say for themselves. So he dealt with the Woman of *Canaan*; He first seemed not to hear her, then did deny her suit, and then gave a very sharp and cutting Reason of his Denial, Because she was but a *Dog*, she was none of the *Israelites* who were his Children; But when Christ hears her wise Answer to his Objection: *Truth Lord, but the Dogs eat the Crumbs that fall from their Master's table,* (which was a strong Piece of *Logick*;) she received an high commendation of her Faith, and a Grant that would certainly please her, *Her will; O woman great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt,* *Mat. 15. 21, 22, &c.* She Retorts his own weapon upon him, and he yields and gives her what's dangerous, if not good, her own *Will*.

My purpose is, (leaving all other ways of Application or *Disagement*) to speak to some principal *CASES* of greatest *concernment* and most frequent *occurrence* in our lives: and I shall only break the Ice in each case, (*for facile est inventis addere*) to set your *Wits* at work, which men, which Christians make least use of in their greatest

greatest occasions; we trifle in serious things, and are serious only in Trifles, or rather to rouse up your *Graces* in the holy Apostle's phrase, 2. *Tim.* 1. 6. *ἀναζωοποιῶν*, To stir up the Fire which lies raked up and buried under the ashes of sloth and supine oscitancy, or rather indeed to Jog the Spirit of Prayer which lies dormant in many bosoms, and doth them little service. I would but set that Plough a going which too many cast in the hedge as almost useless: which yet if well managed, would fill your Garners with all manner of store: And to which whosoever puts his Hand without (too often) looking back, shall be fit for the Kingdom of GOD.

CASE I. *Unacquaintedness with the Lord.*

FIRST then, Is *Unacquaintedness with GOD* thy Misery, the matter of thy moan and mourning? is this thy Complaint (as 'tis of the most knowing) that so little a Portion is heard of Him? that neither the Thunder of his Power, nor the Charms of his LOVE are sufficiently Understood by thee; We rather are known of him, than that we can say, *we know him*, Gal. 4. 9. and where, or who is he hath no need to plead in this particular? Some make this to be Job's case, in this very text; For thus they render it, *Utinam nossem Deum & invenirem eum*: O that I knew God, then I should find him. He that knows God, hath found him; and he shall never find him who never knows him. His Friend that spake last had advised him, Chap. 22. v. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace*, &c. and it may be 'tis thereunto that he answers: O that I knew him, O that I knew where I might find him, to be better acquainted with him; is this thy Case? Go order thy cause before Him, and fill thy mouth with Arguments.

First, Ask him (with an humble and holy boldness) if he be not willing to be known? though he cover himself with Darkness, (but he is too Big and too Bright for a Covering) though He make darkness his Pavilion round about him: And if so; then,

Secondly,

Secondly, Why hath he made Intellectual Beings capable of knowing him; and eternally miserable if they know him not! thy Soul is so for certain. *John* 17. 3.

Thirdly, Why hath he so many ways issued forth and made out Himself? why hath he written such admirable Comments in the things which are seen, upon the invisible things of God? His Eternal Power and Godhead! *Rom.* 1. 20.

Why hath he sparkled forth such glorious Discoveries in the sacred Scriptures, in the face of Jesus Christ! in the births and breathings, the hints and whispers of his Spirit; in the ways and workings of his Providence, in the experience of all his Saints, yea in thine own heart, mind and Soul, dark and doleful though it be for the most part, so that thou canst not order thy speech by Reason of Darkness!

Fourthly, Why hath he so often laid his Commands upon poor sinners to seek him, if he mean not to be found? shew him his own hand for it; thus saith the Lord to the house of *Israel*, *Seek ye me and ye shall live*, *Amos* 5. 4. *Seek the Lord, and ye shall live*, ver. 6. and yet again, verse 8. *Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of Death into the morning*: What meaneth all this earnestness, if he mean not to be found? or saith he these things to *Israel* only, to *Israel* after the flesh, and saith he not the same to all Nations? Nay is not this the very end why he giveth to all Life and Breath, and all things *That they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us*: *Act.* 17. 27. and he never said to the seed of *Jacob* (who wrestle with him) *seek ye me in vain*, *Isa.* 45. 19. And thou hopest thou art one of them, though the weakest of all those spiritual Wrestlers.

Nay shew him his Warrant directed to those who have plowed wickedness, and reaped Iniquity, and eaten the fruit of lies, *Hos.* 10. 12, 13. Why then shouldest thou be excluded?

Fifthly, Ask him if he have not been found of many a soul that sought him not? Did not he prevent them
and

and offer himself, and say, *Behold me, Behold me!* Isa. 65. 1. Is there a soul with him now in Heaven, whose Name is not sought out? Isa. 62. 12. And will he now hide himself from one that seeks him?

Sixthly, Ask him whence is it, that thou hast an *heart* now to seek him; Is it not because he hath found thee, and means to be found of thee? Jer. 29. 12. 13, 14, &c. and he knows that thy whole heart is, or would fain be engaged in this work.

Seventhly, Why doth he allow so long a *time* to seek him in? all the time of this life as some think; at least till the Decree bring forth, Zeph. 2. 1, 2. till he swear in his wrath; till the heart be judicially hardened, which yet is not thy case (through infinite Mercy) thou art not yet free amongst the dead, nor bound among the damned.

Eighthly, Tell him (if thou canst say so truly) that it is in order to practise that thou wouldst be acquainted with him, not meerly to gratify a natural itch after knowledge; not meerly that thou mightest talk of him; but walk with him; and love him, and fear him, and obey him in all things; and even in natural things; *Manus est causa scientiæ*, the hand contributes more to knowledge than the *Brain*: those things we learn to do, we learn by doing them; and as to Spirituals, Christ hath past his word for it, John 7. 17. *If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine.*

Ninthly, Lastly, Tell him 'tis not in a pang, in a fit, in an humour of new fangledness, that thou art thus covetous, thus ambitious of his acquaintance: but (though late, though too, too late thou beganest this Enquiry) he knows thou hast been of this mind for many a day. Thou hast (though weakly) *followed on to know him*, and now thou expectest that good word of his should be made good unto thy soul, Hos. 6. 3. *Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the later and former rain unto the earth*: press these things upon him, and his Love and Truth will let him *hide* no longer.

CASE II. *Unworthiness ever to be acquainted with God.*

SEcondly, Doth the sense of thy more than ordinary *unworthiness* oppress thee ; Doth the horridness and hainousness of thy sins lie as a Mountain of Lead upon thy Soul, and stifle all the movings and mountings of thy Spirit upward ? Doth this nip all the buddings and bloomings of Faith and Hope, and force thee often to sigh out in secret, It is impossible for me to be saved, I shall certainly at last prove a Reprobate ! Is this thy case ? Go order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with Arguments.

First, In all Humility ask him if he did not (before the foundations of the World were laid) chuse voluntarily, absolutely and immutably, what company he would have with him to all Eternity : *Epb. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 9.* sometimes thou thinkest he would never chuse thee : there now lies a secret Bar in thy way ; study the point a little, and get it removed.

He was under no necessity to chuse any ; no not Christ himself to be the head of the Church, for he might have chosen whether ever there should have been such a body yea or no : God the Father begets the Son necessarily, not arbitrarily ; that is, from his *Nature*, not from his *good pleasure* ; but he chooseth him to be the head and root, and Representative of the Church, arbitrarily, not necessarily ; *Col. 1. 19.* this is from his *good pleasure*, not from his *Nature* ; How free is he then in all his other Elections ?

He chose indeed in Christ, but not for Christ ; as in the natural Birth, so here first the head comes forth, and then the Members ; Christ is the cause of the Salvation of the Elect, but not of Election to Salvation. Christ is the meritorious cause of the application of all good, not of God's volition or decreeing that good ; Election is God himself electing : and there can be no cause of God ; God cannot be an effect : Christ indeed was by, but had not the naming of the Elect ; this was the Father's part, and gives him
primitively

primitively and Originally an interest in them as Christ himself acknowledgeth, *John 17. 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me.* Christ himself did not propound or solicit for this or that person; much less any foreseen qualifications, which are the effects, but could not be the causes of that *Love* or *Choice*; and if there was none by to move him, was there any to *manacle* him, to prescribe Laws and limits to him? To say unto him, You may not chuse such or such a scarlet sinner: to set bounds and banks to those great deeps of electing Love, and to say unto them, Hitherto may ye go, and no further, and here must your precious waves be stayed?

He chose indeed not immediately to Salvation, (that was too great a stride at once) but to *Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience*, 2 *Thess. 2. 13.* 1 *Pet. 1. 2.* Not because he foresaw some would be holy, but that they might be so, *Eph. 1. 4.* The great plot was how to conform sinful, woful Creatures to the Image of his Son, *Rom. 8. 29.* and this thy Soul likes passing well; Go then and put him to it: ask him if he will own this Doctrine, and seal it upon thy heart: (it matters not how many men disown it) and tell him thou canst not by any thing thou discernest therein conclude thyself to be excluded, though thou yieldest thyself to be the chiefest of sinners, and that thy case is reserved only for his cognizance; for thou canst not fully utter it to any creature living.

Secondly, tell him in condemning he glorifies but one or two of his Attributes, Justice and Sovereignty; but in saving he will magnify them all.

Thirdly, Mind him how often he hath already sacrificed to his Justice, by punishing such offenders as thou hast been; Hell is full of Instances, full of those Sacrifices; and yet the sufferings of his Son do more set off the Glory of his Holiness than them all, than all the Everlasting Torments of the Damned.

Fourthly, Ask him if Heaven will not afford plenty of *Precedents* for the like mercy thou now needest and beggest of him: Ask if *Manasses* and *Mary Magdalene*, and many such like be not there with Him.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, If He never met the like since the beginning of his Creation (for so sometimes thou thinkest) ask him if he mean to let slip such an *Opportunity* to set forth the Greatness and Transcendency of his Grace and Mercy in all its Pomp and Power, Oriency and Lustre; and fill thy Heart and Mouth with this Argument: 'Tis like Goliab's Sword to David, *There is none like it*: See how David himself Weilds it, *Psal. 25. 11. For thy name's sake O Lord pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*; if this be a good Argument, thou dost not want one; it seems David thought so, and so did Moses, *Exod. 32. 31. Ob this people have sinned a great sin! but here's work now for the Greatness of God's Power in pardoning*, which in those cases he flies to, *Numb. 14. 17. and now I beseech thee let the Power of my Lord be great according as thou hast Spoken.*

God to honour his Son in reconciling us to himself, permits the greatest sins and enmities to be in the hearts and lives of those he intends to save, (saith a precious servant of his) and thou mayest well hope God will not be wanting to the Glory of his own Grace and of his Son's Merits; for the illustrating and manifesting whereof, the pardoning of so great and grievous sins will serve abundantly; such an overgrown sinner doth *Ansam præbere*, give him a fair occasion, and he will not lose it. *Cranmer* a little before his going to the stake, relieves his sorrowful Spirit after his sinful Recantation with this consideration: *Magnum illud mysterium, &c.* Surely that great Mystery of God's Incarnation was never contrived for the pardon only of lesser offences; 'Tis the Top of all thy Saviour's Glory, that *He is able to Save to the utmost them that come unto God by Him, Heb. 7. 25.*

Nay, if upon strong grounds thou concludest thyself (all things considered) *A non-such*: Ask him how he will come off from that Obligation, of *drawing all men* (that is, some of all sorts) *unto himself, John 12. 32.* If thine Iron heart feel not the attractive power and virtue of this Load-stone, there will be never a sinner of thy sort, size and kind to adorn his triumph at the day of his appearing! Those Sanguine sinners against the
Holy

Holy Ghost (the only rank and file of sinners excluded, *Matth. xii. 32.*) have no mind to plead as thou hast, and thou art none of their number.

Sixthly, Tell him he shall be more *admired* and loved for such a Miracle of Matchless Mercy, than for all his curious Works of Creation or dreadful Acts of Vengeance.

Seventhly, Tell him it must be no small matter, no easy, no ordinary thing that must beget *Eternal* Trances, and Extasies, and Admirations; the greatest wonders of this world, last but a little while, those of the next must last for ever; and the pardoning, and purifying, the Sanctifying and Saving of such a Sinner will *Eternally* yield Oil to such a flame.

Eighthly, Tell him no Soul in Heaven shall *admire* or love him *more* than thou (though now thou comest in the Rear of all his Adorers) and thou mayest venture to say so, if that of Christ be true (as certainly it is) *Luke vii. 47. that he to whom much is forgiven, will love much.*

Ninthly, Lastly, Tell him that the wonder shall not be *confined* to thy person, but run through Heaven and affect all men, and Angels, and that (in all likelihood) many shall wonder more for his Grace to thee than to themselves, who never sinn'd up to the height, nor after the similitude of thy transgressions: especially Angels that never sinn'd, and such as died in Infancy, or lived in Innocency in comparison of thee; how should they know the extent of Grace, were it not for such superlative sinners? and that is one of his great Designs to be admired, *2 Thes. i. 10.* and he knows that in thee he cannot miss of it.

The end of Philosophy is said to be to admire nothing; but the end and scope of Divinity, is to make us admire God in every thing; in this thing especially, the Eternal Salvation of the greatest Sinners.

C A S E III. *Jealousy as to Christ.*

THIRDLY, Hast thou any secret Fears that this Lord Jesus Christ whom thou hast heard and talked

talked (it may be) so often of, takes no notice of thee, has no mind to do any thing for thee; is this, (it may be when thou art most retired into thy self, and most serious) thy case and thy condition? Go order thy cause before him, and fill thy *Mouth* with Arguments; Remember thy distance, and then,

First, Ask him what made him take so great a journey? what brought him down from Heaven to Earth? was it not to seek and to save such lost straying creatures as thou art, who all fall to the Lord of the Soil? if thou art not, hast not been lost every way, even in thine own sense and apprehension, let him skip over thee and leave thee out.

Secondly, Ask him why doth he invite all weary burdened poor souls to come unto him; why doth he command them to cast themselves upon him, *Mat. xi. 28. John iii. 23.* threaten those that do not, with the utmost peril and punishment, *John iii. ult.* if he be not willing to bid those that come welcome? the great quarrel between Him and sinners is this, *ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. John 5. v. 40.*

Thirdly, Tell him thou verily believest he never yet cast out any one soul that came unto him, according to that Blessed Word of his, *John vi. 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out:* (A Text that hath been a Sanctuary to many a troubled soul) Ask him now if he mean to begin with thee, if thou shalt be the first that ever was refused by him?

Fourthly, Tell him he knows all things, he knows that thou dost not come unto him for *fashion-sake*, because 'tis the custom, and they are in no request with whom Christ is in none, at least in pretence and semblance.

Fifthly, He knows thou dost not follow him for *loaves*, for outward advantage and accommodations, because preferment waits upon profession.

Sixthly, Tell him 'tis true indeed, 'tis *necessity* inforceth thee to come unto him, because otherwise thou art lost and ruined to all Eternity; and yet he knows what a value thy soul has for him, that thou lookest on

an interest in him as thy great concernment; the one thing needful, the more excellent way; that all thy treasures, pleasures, honours, yea, thy very Relations (which are as so many parts and pieces of thy self) are as if they were not, in comparison to him; are to thee (as all Nations are to him) as a *drop of the Bucket*, neither here nor there, if in *competition* or *comparison* with Him. Phil. iii. 8.

Seventhly, Lastly, Thou canst say to him, that tho' 'tis out of Necessity, 'tis out of *choice* too that thou comest to him; were it possible for thee to be saved any other way, thou wouldst chuse this rather; there was a time indeed when thy heart gauded about strangely so oft to change thy way; thou wouldst have gone to any door for relief rather than his; but since thou hast had some little glances and glimmerings of Him, tho' but in a transient way, though but in a Glass, or at a Window, or through the *Lattice*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Cant. ii. 9. since thou hast tasted some small drops of his sweetness, he knows thy heart is so taken therewith, yea with that Glorious and most Gracious *contrivance* of His undertaking for thee (the Wicked being delivered, and the Righteous coming in his stead) yea with the love and lovely *person* of a Saviour, that these are now become more with thee, than Salvation it self, if that were only deliverance from wrath to come; canst thou plead thus? Surely, a full Reward shall be given thee of the Lord God of *Israel*, under whose wings thou art come to trust, though thou art but a stranger, and thy Soul in her own eyes not *like to one of his hand-maidens*, Ruth ii. 10. 12, 13. to allude thereunto.

CASE IV. *Jealousy concerning God the Father.*

BUT it may be thou art pretty well satisfied concerning the freeness and forwardness of Christ to help thee; He hath done and Suffered enough in all conscience to convince thee: and thou hast very soft and sweet thoughts of him, but terrible ones concerning the *Father*, thou lookest upon him as an Angry God, an incensed Judge, an enraged Enemy, with his
Hand

Hand always up and ready to strike, but that Christ steps in and wards the blow; or at least thou suspectest him to be no such hearty friend to thee as Christ is: that the whole Treaty of Peace tendered to thee by him through his Son is but an Ambushment laid to catch thee, and to conclude thee under the greater condemnation, because the Father stands much out of play, and thou knowest not what to think of him; is this thy sad case now and then upon misgivings and tremblings of thy Heart about the great business of Eternity? Go order thy cause before *him* and fill thy mouth with Arguments.

First, Ask him if that sweet Son of his (whom the World once was so happy as to see, tho' so unhappy as not to know him) if he be not just *such another* for all the World as himself * *the brightness of his Glory and the express Image of his person*, Heb. i. 3.

And sure Christ the sinners friend (as some sinners censured him) was affable enough, kind enough, compassionate enough, shewed love enough to poor sinners, in his carriage and Conversation; in his abasements and condescensions, in his Life, in his Death; if not, where and who is he that will come and shew more? Why, but saith Christ, my Father is just such another as I am to an hair's breadth: his heart as full of love and tenderness as mine every whit: know one, know both, *John x. 30. I and my Father are one: and John xii. 44, 45. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent Me; and he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. And John xiv. 19. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then shew us the Father? and I came out of his bosom on purpose to declare*

* He that cannot look upon the Sun in its strength at Noon-day, may take the model of it in the water, or in the Moon at full: so we that cannot behold the glory of Divine Majesty in the Godhead or in God, the Father only, may safely behold the Map or Model of his incomprehensible goodness in *the man* Christ Jesus.

him

him, John i. 18. To be his *Exegetis*, that's the word) to expound him as a clear *Comment* tells us what's in a dark text, and if this be confirmed to thee by the Father, if he will own it, as certainly he will, thou art well enough ; but thou mayest go further and ask him,

Secondly, If he had not the first hand in the whole Design of Love and Life to poor sinners, (for there is a priority of Order, and Origination, though not of time) and to believe this, there are grounds sufficient to induce thee : for,

First, Was it not He who first *summoned* that great Council held by all the Persons in *Elohim*, when neither Man nor Angel existed, nor had been worthy to have been admitted there, if they had then existed ; there he sat in consultation with his Wisdom and Love, his Word and Spirit, *de arduis Regni, de arcanis Imperii* ; and especially about Man's Salvation, and can that blessed womb miscarry with any of its conceptions ? Surely no.

Secondly, Was it not He who first pitched upon the Son, and laid him as the *foundation* to the whole Fabrick ; one able to bear up the weight of all the work ; though thy Load alone be enough to crack the Axel-tree of Heaven and Earth : to break the back of the whole Creation, to bear down any other foundation before it into Hell : yet here's help laid upon one that is *mighty*, mighty to save ? And if the Angels shouted for Joy to see the corner stone of the earth laid, *Job xxxviii. 7.* Shall not the Saints with delight see the corner Stone of their Salvation laid by the hand of the Father ? and ask if this be nothing unto thee ; if thou art to have no place in this building ? however bless him for laying such a *foundation*.

Thirdly, Was it not he who then took particular cognizance of things and persons, which is called in Scripture God's *foreknowledge*, Rom. viii. 29. and xi. 1, 2, &c. Enough to overwhelm a poor sinner when he comes to get an inkling of it, that he was then minded ; what, me Lord ? Didst thou then think of me, and dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one ? *Job. xiv. 3.*

Fourthly, Was it not He who then picked and *chose*
out

out of Angels and men, whom he would have confirmed amongst the Angels, called therefore the *Elect Angels*, 1 Tim. v. 21. and though they were never out of favour, yet they are said to be *reconciled*, Col. i. 20. Confirmation being that to them, which Reconciliation is to us; and they had it by renouncing their standing upon their own single bottom, and running under the wing of Christ; accepting and owning him as their Head, Col. ii. 10. God would not keep an Angel in Heaven, that would not be beholding to his Son for it: And amongst men he chose whom he would have recovered, Rom. ix. 11, 13. Ask how thou mayest make thy *Calling* and *Election* sure; and never turn this Grace into *wantonness*: for to abuse this Doctrine is one of the blackest badges and saddest signs of *Reprobation*, Jude, verse 4.

Fifthly, Was it not He who ratified his choice by a solemn *Decree*, called the *Purpose of God according to Election*, Rom. ix. 11. The Mystery of his *Will according to the good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself*, Ephes. i. 9. *The Eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Eph. iii. 11. And yet there's no unrighteousness with God (which *Paul* foresaw some would charge him with,) Rom. ix. 14. No cruelty, no Dissimulation, no Tyranny; and if the Lord hath purposed, who shall *disannul* it? Isa. xiv. 24, 27.

Sixthly, Was it not He who called for the *Books*, and caused all the Resolves to be entered, Heb. x. 5. even to the *very names written in the Lamb's Book of Life*, Rev. xiii. 8. and xxi. 27. with the *Golden Letters of Love*, with indelible Characters in his blood; (we read of no black Book of Death, and therefore I meddle not with it) but hadst thou ever any help to read thy name written in Heaven, this is matter of more joy than if thou couldst cast out Devils, and work wonders, Luke x. 20. if not yet, all in good time, go to the Father and he will help thee to spell thy name there by his Spirit of Adoption, who was, and is a Member of this Council, and well acquainted with all that passed there.

Seventhly, Was it not He who then *ordered* all other things in a way of subordination and subserviency to

the Sanctification and Salvation of the Elect ; Good works then received his Seal, *Ephes. ii. 10.* Evil ones (by a just Analogy) a Brand, He then drew up *the Ordinances of Heaven* : passed a *Decree* for the *Sea*, and for the *Rain*, and for the opening of the *Eye-lids* of the *Morning* ; to cause the *Day-spring* to know its place, and the *Sun* his going down, unless forbidden, as in the days of *Joshua*. He then appointed natural Agents to act necessarily ; the Sun to shine, the Fire to burn, the Sea to run in its course ; yet he set them not a going with such an irresistible swing, but that he can stop them at his pleasure.

Free Agents to act freely, the Will of man to be always free in all its acts, if not *Quoad specificationem*, to do good or evil at his pleasure, yet *quoad exercitium*, he need never do evil, unless he pleaseth : so that he is left without excuse.

And all other things were ordered as *Scaffolds* to this building ; now who but a mad man would lay his bed on the scaffold and say, that's accommodation good enough ; and so take up with that, no matter for the Building ; beg that he would never leave thee to that madness, but lead thee to things Spiritual and Eternal, by all externals, and that all things may work together for thy good, according to his antient appointment.

Eighthly, Was it not by an Agreement between his Son and him, that he should sit as *Creditor* in Heaven and the Son come down to be responsible to Justice ? otherwise there was love enough in his heart, to have let the Son sit *Creditor* in Heaven, and to have come down himself as *Debitor* and died for thee : and therefore saith Christ, though I should not pray for you, *the Father himself loveth you*, John xvi. 27. Nay he loves you so well that he doth *therefore love me*, *because I lay down my life for you*, John x. 17. what a strange expression of love is this ?

Ninthly, Did not He draw up all the Son's Articles and Instructions, as

1. That he must begin his work in deepest humiliation and abasement.
2. That he must pawn his Glory to go through-stitch with

with it, which he Redeems, and Re-demands upon his performance, *John xvii. 4. 5.*

3. That he must run the Gantlop in that *Nature* he would Redeem, and be content that every one should have a fling at him, 'tis *Hillary's* allusion, *naturæ nostræ contumelias transcurrit.*

4. That his God-head must be eclipsed and veiled, and he made like unto his Brethren in their natural necessities, sinless infirmities, live by faith, get every thing by prayer: not do his own will, but his that sent him, and so fulfil all Righteousness; and why was he thus conformed unto us, but that we might be made con-formable unto him?

5. That he must in the days of his flesh orally and personally declare his Father's Name and love unto his Brethren: and afterwards Depute and Substitute some to do it to the end of the world; and so long as his Leiger Ambassadors reside in any place uncalled home, not sent for away: the Treaty of Peace holds and continues, and their work is not only to declare Christ, but the Father also: and this was the sweetest promise that Christ could chear up his Disciples with, *John xvi.*

25. *The time cometh when I shall no more speak-unto you in Proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father:* and that's a most sweet and satisfying Object, *John xiv.*

8. *Lord shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.*

6. That He must Die a Bloody, painful, shameful, accursed death to pay the Debts of his people, and then rise again from the dead, and bring up his blood with him into the Holiest of Holies, and there exercise and execute the office of his everlasting Priesthood; if he would have his death which was of infinite value in it self to be of infinite Virtue and efficacy unto others; and is not all this performed exactly, and hath he not herein commended his love unto us with a witness, *Rom. v. 8, &c.*

7. That whatever was given him, he must presently give of the same to his Members, to fit them for that Glorious Fellowship, whereunto they are ordained; what he *Receives* with one hand, he must *give* with the other; and we see what *David* calls *Receiving*, *Psalms*

lxviii. 18. *Paul* calls *Giving*, Eph. iv. 12. as if these were one and the same thing with *Christ*, and thou desirest no more of *Christ* than what the Father hath ordered out by him.

8. After the Father (whose motion and project this was) had wrought of the Son to undertake it, did not he then engage to stand by him and to supply him with all necessaries: a *Body* to suffer in, and a *Spirit* to that Body without *Measure*, and to bring those in to him in Time by Retail, whom he had given to him in the Lump, before Time was, he doth more than *Invite* (as saith *Arminius*) he doth effectually draw by an Omnipotent sweetness; and *Christ* must not scruple to entertain the most Leprous Loathsome sinner whom the Father is pleased to bring unto him; Ay, and the Father must help to *Keep* them also, whom he hath brought in, *John* x. 28, 29. (a Precious Cordial in Apostatizing times,) and all this being done according to an antient complot and *Agreement*; *Socinus* cannot from these supplies or dependencies infer the Son's *Inferiority* to the Father; and the Poor believing sinner may press him with all these *Engagements*.

9. Over and above all this, Did he not put forth his paternal Authority, and lay his *Commands* upon his Son, to engage in this great service, *John* x. 18. and xii. 9. 20. as *Pharaoh* to express a Pleonasm of Love, commands *Joseph* to be kind to his Nearest and Dearest Relations; which one would think, little needed, *Gen.* xlv. 19. Go look God in the face, and say as *David* doth, *Psal.* lxxi. 2. *Thou hast given Commandment to save me*; And to whom? To Men or Angels? No: to me, says *Christ*: *This Commandment have I received of my Father*. If *Christ* fail, there is not only breach of Articles, but *Disobedience* too. Thou canst not believe that *Christ* loves thee so well, as to lay down his Life for thee: But canst thou believe he loves the Father? that's easy, there's no doubt of that: Why (says *Christ*, when he was going to Die) *That the World may know how I Love the Father as the Father hath given me Commandment, even so do I*, *John* xiv. 31.

10. Yet again to make all sure, lest the Human Nature

Nature of Christ upon its assumption, should shrink at the approach of Sufferings: Doth not the Father engage to *Reward* him plentifully, to give him a Royal and an Everlasting Priesthood, a name above every Name, appoints unto him a Kingdom, *Luke xxii. 29.* and above all, assures him of the Salvation of those he died for, according to this Agreement, *Isa. liii. 11.* without which nothing could ever have satisfied him, So that as the Assumption of the Human Nature is the highest instance of *Free Mercy*; so is the *Rewarding* thereof in its state of exaltation, the highest instance of *Remunerative Justice.*

All this needed not to engage Christ to work, so much as to engage us to believe that the Father was first in *Willing*, as he is in *Subsisting*, the Son second to him therein; but not in Heartiness of Good Will, For therein they are both equal: They must needs be One in *Will*, who are so in *Nature* and *Being*; but still the Father is first in *Love*, *John iii. 16.* For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life. And 1 *John iv. 9, 10.* In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might Live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins. And therefore Love is laid at his door by the Apostle, 2 *Cor. xiii. 14.* The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. The Grace of Christ makes way for our enjoying the Love of God; but we had never known the Grace of Christ, had it not been first for the Love of God, who therefore is called Our Saviour, 1 *Tim. i. 1.*

11. And as if all this were not enough; did not the Father Seal his Son a Commission, To give life to lost sinners, *John vi. 27.* And therefore Christ so often mentions the Father as *sending* him, and furnishing him with Miracles, his *Letters Credential* where ever he came.

12. Nay more, If Suffering for Our sakes be a sign of Love, (as who can deny or doubt it) to speak after the manner of men: Had not the Father His share of

Sufferings as well as the *Son*? Was it nothing for him to part with his *Son*? such a *Son*, an only *Son*, the delight of his Heart and Eyes, and that not amongst friends, but enemies? Who would seek and suck his Blood in this sense to *spare* him, and yet in another not to *spare* him, but to *bruise* him, and take *pleasure* in so doing? Is all this nothing? He may seem indeed to have an easy part to sit in Heaven and receive satisfaction: but you see it cost him something too, nay more; *He denies himself, and disappears, and gives up the immediate management of all affairs into the hands of his Son*: That part the *Son* took was sharper but shorter, lasted not much above three and thirty years, but from the time of *Christ's Resurrection*: 'Tis a long *ævum* before that God come again to be *all in all*, 1 Cor. xv. 24. and 28. and he in a manner remains hid till the day of Judgment, now *Christ* is *all in all*, Col. iii. 12. *The Son transacts all by the Spirit, till the last day, and the Father worketh now only in and through the Son*: Thus you see the Father veiling and eclipsing his Glory, to make it shine the more hereafter, and in the mean time his love that shines forth herein gloriously.

13. Hath not the Father (as well as *Christ*) an hand in *sending the Holy Ghost*, John xiv. 16. and xv. 26. to make a discovery and Application of all these things? yea he is called *the Promise of the Father*, which *Christ* had often hinted to his disciples, as the best news he could bring them from Heaven, *Acts* i. 4. *which (saith he) ye have heard of me.*

14. Lastly, Was it not he that wrapt up all this in a glorious *Covenant*, a *Covenant of Grace, Life and Peace*, of which I may say as *John* of the Commandment of Love, 1 *John* 2. 7, 8. 'Tis both the *New and Old Covenant*; the first and last, and everlasting *Covenant*, called a *Promise*, (lest the word *Covenant* should scare us, and make us think there's more required of us, by way of restipulation, than we can reach unto) *Tit.* i. 2. 1 *Joh.* 2. 25. *Covenant of Promise*, Eph. ii. 12. and while we are altogether *strangers* thereunto, we are without *Hope*. The other *Covenant* was contrived and given forth chiefly to make way and welcome for this,
and

and 'tis this Covenant the precious things whereof are sealed up unto us in the Sacraments : This is that secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him, *Psal.* 25. 13. to make them know the Covenant he is ever mindful of it, and therefore sent Redemption unto his People : He hath commanded this Covenant for ever, *Holy and Reverend is his Name*, *Psal.* 111. 5. 9, &c. and 'tis this will afford Death-bed Comfort, *2 Sam.* 23. 5. Although my House be not so with God, Yet he hath made with me an *everlasting Covenant*, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my Salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.

Now then though all these things are Phrased in the Language of Men, yet not without warrant from the Holy Ghost, who condescends thus to lisp out the Mysteries of Salvation, else we could not understand, or take in any thing of them ; and though they are all but *One Act* in God, as all his Attributes are but one Divine Excellency and Glory, the Divine Essence itself : but this is too big to come in all at once into our narrow hearts, therefore God lets out Himself by degrees, by drops and beams as we may bear it ; 'tis so in the discovery of himself, and 'tis so in the discovery of his Council, and Operations concerning us in Christ Jesus.

And though the Operations *ad extra* are undivided, but (according to the ancient agreement between them) the Operation is attributed to that person : the manner of whose subsisting appears most in it, *beginning* work to the Father, *carrying on* to the Son, *finishing* to the Holy Ghost.

Yea though many disown and dislike these things, yet now go, and put them home to God : and if he will own them, and bear his witness to them, and seal them upon thy heart, it will be sufficient for thee, to shame thee for all thy hard thoughts of him, and to secure thee from the like tormenting fears for time to come, and (I know it) he will work wonders (if thy Spirit be stirred up to put him to it) rather than be wanting in his witness to so great a Truth as this, and so shalt thou be (as *Job* speaks) delivered for ever from thy Judge, from all frightful Ideas and apprehensions of him, as an an-

gry severe Judge and enabled to walk with him all thy days, as with a most indulgent and tender-hearted Father.

CASE V. *Fear of Unbelief.*

BUT what is all this to me (may a poor Soul say,) though I assent unto it, and think I believe it, if my Faith prove a false blaze of Fancy, Presumption, vain Hope? and thou hast cause to fear and suspect it, because it hath not the Virtue and Operation of that plant of Paradise, *The Faith of the Operation of God, the Faith of God's Elect.* Col. 2. 12. Tit. 1. 1. Is this thy Case many times? Go, order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with Arguments; Go, bow thy knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus: And,

First, Tell him, he knows how thy heart is carried forth towards him, only according to the terms and tenour of a *Covenant of Grace*, and not of *Works*, thou canst not by any means away with that, that he should deal and do by thee as thou dost by him; no thou canst not find the life of thine hand, as 'tis said of some, *Isa. 57. 10. thine hands are not sufficient for thee*, as 'tis said of Judah, *Deut. 33. 7.* And will he trample upon a worm that would fain creep towards him, only in that way which he himself hath chalked out and is so pleasing to him?

Secondly, he knows that the sole ground of thy confidence is the precious and plenteous Grace of the Glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, which tells thee that Christ died for sinners, enemies, ungodly, impotent ones; and ask him, if he have ever a Soul with him in Glory that was not once such an one? that many are ransomed and pardoned by Christ; but not how many, Why may'st not thou be one of those many?

That Salvation is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth: but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. 9. 16. even to the prisoners of unbelief, Rom. 11. 32. these and a thousand such like precious things the Gospel uttereth.

Ask him now if thou must be ashamed of the Gospel, as thou hast been of the Law, of thy looking for life by

by it? and if he will reject this confidence also, so that thou must not prosper in it.

Thirdly, Ask him if there be not a double *reconciliation* plainly taught in the Doctrine of the Gospel? *Rom.* 59. 10, 11. *2 Cor.* 5. 18, &c. the one actually purchased by the death of Jesus Christ, and acknowledged by God at that time; the other at the conversion of a sinner, when he lays down his arms and enmities, and the knowledge of the one is the means to the other: Hath God then *stirred up all his wrath* again, and will not suffer a poor soul to come near him, who would fain *receive the atonement*, and be made friends with him?

Fourthly, Ask him wherefore hath this Gospel been brought to thine ears, to thine heart; but that thou shouldest trust in it, and that perfectly, (*τελειως*) even to the end, *1 Pet.* 1. 13. Did he not call thee to *Repentance*, and will he now repent of his Calling, that cannot be, for his gifts and calling are without Repentance, *Rom.* 11. 29.

Did he not bid thee come unto him upon those waters of the Sanctuary; And must thou now sink and perish, to allude to that of *Peter*, *Matth.* 14. 30.

Fifthly, Tell him he knows how fully, how thankfully thy soul *submits* to that of *Righteousness* which is revealed and offered in the Gospel: and none perish in unbelief, but they who are *ignorant* thereof, or *submit* not thereunto; *Rom.* 10. 3. Once indeed thou wert proud of thine own polluted Rags, but hast now cast them all away, and said unto them with detestation, get ye hence; and wilt never gather them together again, but Blesseth him with all thy heart and Soul, for that better provision made in the Gospel, and wouldst fain appear daily, continually before him, cloathed with that Righteousness which Christ came on purpose to bring into the World, *Dan.* 9. 24.

Sixthly, He knows thy heart closeth with Christ for *sanctification* as well as Righteousness to justify thy Faith, as that must justify thy person, it closeth with the whole Gospel, with whole Christ in all his Offices; and that there is nothing more desirable to thine eye than that Holiness which the Gospel requireth, Promiseth

miseth and Promoteth. How fain would thy Soul be his Glass, wherein he might View all his own Glories, Virtues, Beauties, Graces, by reflection: And will he break this glass in pieces?

Seventhly and lastly, Ask him if he will but stand by that one good word, spoken in his name to his servant, *Rom. 5. 20. Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound*; this is not the spawn or spume of thy fancy, nor hast thou met with this saying in some good book, whose Author might be mistaken; but if God will make it good (as thou thinkest him bound to do, even for the Glory of his Grace, Wisdom and Truth) thou canst tell where there are *superfluities of naughtiness*, *Jam. 1. 21.* and He can tell where there are Super-aboundings, overflowings of Grace and Mercy; and if he will draw up the sluices, thou shalt not only Honour him by believing, but be encouraged to look for more than ordinary Favours from him, even because sin hath so abounded: And is not this the Faith that should come? or must thou look for another? or if this be it, why then is not thy heart purified, heart and life sanctified by it? Why is it not unto his servant according to his word? *Acts 15. 9.* and *26. 18.* Plead and press this hard upon him, and (my Soul for thine) he will not deny thee, he will not say thee nay: you may not take mine but the Apostle *Peter's* word for it, that this is *the true Grace of God wherein ye stand*, *1 Pet. 5. 12.*

CASE VI. Fear of Hypocrisie.

BUT there is a damp upon thy Spirit, a great discouragement which takes off thy boldness before him: thou fearest that though thou dost (as thou thinkest) believe and rejoice for a season in the Grace believed, yet 'tis not likely to last always, thou shalt not be able to hold the rejoicing of thy confidence firm unto the end, thou shalt prove but a temporary; a dunghill covered with snow, which will melt away; thou findest so much *Hypocrisie* in whatever thou goest about, thou hast done much evil without the mixture of any good, but never any good without the mixture of much

much evil, and the Hypocrite is justly hated of God and man; the world hates him because he seems good, and God abhors him because he only seems, and is not truly such: and this sometimes thou fearest will be thy Portion, and can'st not discover the bottom of thy misery to any flesh living, and this ere long will put an end to thy pleading; thou fearest that both the Gift, and Grace, and spirit of Prayer (if ever thou hadst it) will leave thee, according to that in *Job* 27, 8, 9, 10. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul, will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him, will he delight himself in the Almighty: will he always call upon God? Well, Go to God in this case however, Go order thy cause before him and fill thy mouth with Arguments.*

1. Tell him He, and He alone knows whether thou aimest not at *entireness* of heart before him, both as to the *subject*, the whole heart which thou wouldest have kept even from *thine iniquity*; *Psalms* 18. 23. and as to the *Object*, all his Commandments; *Psalms* 119. 6. and ver. 140. thou knowest not one of them, which thy spirit baulks or boggles at, but the more *pure* his word is, the more thy soul *loveth it*.

And also as to the *means* of Grace, they are all dear and precious to thee, and thou wouldest be found in the use of all his appointments, bid him name that thing which he requires, and which thou knowingly and purposely decline: And is this the guise or way of an Hypocrite? only be sure thy heart reproach thee not.

Secondly, He knows what is the secret *end* of thy living, and why thou art *desirous* or so much as *content* to continue in this World, not to share in the Pleasures or Profits or Honours thereof, (the world's Trinity which it adores and serves, and sacrificeth itself unto, 1 *John* 2. 16. These three are the world's all) but to be receiving or doing some good in thy station and generation; and can it be thus with an Hypocrite?

Thirdly, He knows that thou *chusest* rather to be sickly or poor, or disgraced, and to walk close with him, than in Health, Wealth, or Honour to wander from him, or to lie out at a great distance from Communion

munion with him, yea rather to be following hard after Him, though thou shouldest never *enjoy* his Glorious, Ravishing, Transporting presence, while thou livest, than to swim in abundance of carnal enjoyments, and to have a heart careless of him, estranged from him : and is it thus with any Hypocrite in the World ?

Fourthly, Tell him thou hadst rather he should *know* all thy *secret* sinnings against him, than that he should not know all thy secret sighings and Lamentations after him, the world hath seen and stumbled at many of thy miscarriages, but hath not seen nor recovered by thy secret mournings ; but *he seeth in secret* : and therefore tell him,

Fifthly, It will not be for his Honour to reject thee, for *all must out* : all thy secret sobbings and pantings and pursuings after him, must be known one day : and what would Angels and men think to see such a mourner in secret cast off to all eternity ?

Lastly, Appeal unto him, He knows thou hast been usually as earnest with him for *Holiness* in time of *prosperity*, as in times of straits and adversity : and is this the manner of Hypocrites ? Surely no ; *Uzziah* was *marvellously helped* till he was *strong* ; but when he was strong *his heart was lifted up* to his destruction for he transgressed against the Lord his God, 2 *Chr.* 4. 5. and 14. 15. It was not so with *Jehosaphat*, he sought the Lord God of his Fathers, and walked in his Commandments, and not after the doings of (backsliding) *Israel*, Therefore the Lord *stablished* the Kingdom in his Hand, and all *Judah* brought him Presents, and he had riches and honour in abundance ; *And his Heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD.* 2 *Chron.* 17. 4, 5, 6. Piety procures a settlement, and that brings off the People to an acknowledgment of their Magistrate ; and to a love unto Him, and that ushers in plenty and abundance, and an Honest Heart in the midst of it all, is carried Higher and Nearer to God, as the waters bare up the Ark, and lifted it nearer Heaven.

If it be thus with thee, in thy measure, sure, there may be and will be some Leaven of Hypocrisy, which may somewhat sour thy performances, which yet upon
thy

thy Humiliation shall be pardoned: And thy Judge himself and his Deputy in thine own bosom will pronounce that thou art no Hypocrite.

CASE VII. *Fear of being acted only by Fear.*

PEradventure thou mayest reply, though I may prove no Hypocrite, yet I shall prove little better than a Slave. I Fear I am Awed and Acted only by *A Spirit of Fear*, Rom. 8. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 7. and this is far from a Gospel-Spirit, from a Spirit of Adoption; they are set as Adversaries and Antipodes one against another: and if there was not a dread of God upon my Spirit, if Destruction from God were not a Terror unto me, I know not what would become of me, nor whither Satan and my corruptions would Hurry me. Well, yet go and order thy cause before him, and fill thy Mouth with *Arguments*.

First, Ask him if He have not observed ordinarily thy Spirit to be more melted and *Humbled* when he hath filled thy heart with joy, and thy Mouth with Praises, than by an evil Felt or Feared, than by the sense or approach of any evil whatsoever, and is this the Frame of a Slave, or of a Child?

Secondly, Tell him 'tis true, thou fearest him (and so do all the Saints and Angels in Heaven) but 'tis with such a Fear as *Enlargeth* thy Heart towards him, and doth not straiten it; such a Fear as is an helper of thy Joy, not an enemy to it; such a fear as furthers the *Comforts of the Holy Ghost*; such a fear as hath *no torment* in it: and therefore love though perfected shall never cast it out; and thou didst never see a good day, till this took hold of thee; dost never enjoy a good hour when this doth not over-rule thee. 'Tis a bitter thing to thee that ever thou wert without it. *Jer. 2. 19:*

Thirdly, Tell Him it is *Him* and *his goodness* that thou fearest, *Hof. 3. 5, Psal. 28. 1. Cant. 1. 2.* his frown, his absence, his *silence*, are now more dreaded by thee than all his Darts and Thunders used to be formerly; the loss of a smile, of a *Kiss*, a kindness, is that thou most

most Fearest, and this thou takest to be a Spirit of Ingenuity, not of Slavery.

Fourthly, He knows thy voice, and can tell whether he hear any of *His own Language* from thee or no, how badly and brokenly soever it be pronounced; though thou *chatterest like a Crane, or a Swallow, or mournest like a Dove*, as *Hezekiah* speaks of himself. *Isai. 28. 14.*

Every creature conveys its sound, its tone and tune to the young ones, and none of his children are still born; the Spirit unties their tongues, and sets them a crying *Abba Father*; and he knows thou dost cry sometimes: not coldly tender him some dead prayers, but cry, and not as a thief at a Bar to a Judge whom he neither loves nor hath any confidence in, but as a poor child when in distress who daily asks his Father's Blessing.

Fifthly, Desire him that he would *feel* thee as *Isaac* did *Jacob*; The desire of thy soul is not only to have a smooth Voice, but Hands also so far from roughness; that he may for ever own thee as one of the seed of *Jacob*; thy heart is against a Covenant, of Works, but for all the works of the Covenant.

CASE VIII. *Sense of fearful Backslidings.*

OH, but *The Treacherous Dealers have dealt Treacherously; yea the Treacherous Dealers have dealt very Treacherously*; thy Revoltings have been multiplied, and thy *Backslidings* are many, and how shall He Pardon thee for this? It puts God himself to a Pause, to a Stand, to Demur upon it, *Jer. 5. 7. and Chap. 3. 19. How shall I put thee among the Children?* Nay, *Chap. 2. 29. He seemeth to put a stop to all further pleading; Wherefore will ye plead with me, ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord*: Nay, which is the worst of all, the Holy Spirit of God being hereby grieved; where hast thou now another friend to speak a good word for thee? when the Father is offended, there's the Son to mediate for thee; and when Christ is disobliged, yet there is the Spirit to intercede for thee, but when the

the Spirit is vexed and quenched, there's never a fourth Person in the Trinity to make up the breach to compromise the difference; who shall now put words into thy mouth, or fill thy mouth with *Arguments*? yet even in this *Case* try him, if he will not help thee at this dead list, and prove an Advocate for thee; for he himself hath penn'd a form of prayer for one in thy case, *Hof. 14. 1, 2, 3.* Go then even to this holy Spirit, and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*.

First, Tell him thou hast read or heard of his *Goodness*, *Psal. 143. 10.* and of his *Love*, *Rom. 15. 30.* Not only that which he begets in the Saints, but that which he bears to them, all the World hath had experience of it, the Church especially; and thou art not altogether a stranger to it, and hast now occasion further to try it; and hopest to find it, no whit inferiour either to that of the Father in giving his Son, or that of the Son in giving himself for thee; though he hath not been equally loved and honoured with them, but wofully neglected and forgotten.

Secondly, Ask him if it be possible for thee to be in a worse plight than when he had first to do with thee? and did he then fall to work upon thee when he might have abhorred to foul his fingers with thee, *and will he now forsake the work of his own hands?* *Psal. 138. 8.*

Thirdly, Thou hopest he will dwell in thy dust when death hath done its worst unto thee, and raise that again, according to *Rom. 8. 11.* and will he now forsake thy soul and not raise that again, now that sin and the Devil have done their worst against it; for worse than what hath been, thou thinkest, cannot befall thee.

Fourthly, Have not the most eminent Saints that ever he dwelt in, had their backslidings, and sinned even against that grace wherein lay their excellency, were they all restored by him, and shalt thou only be abandoned?

Fifthly, Were not all those gracious Tenders to Backsliders, framed, filled, and recorded by him? *Jer. 3. 22. Return ye backsliding Children and I will heal your backslidings: Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the*

the Lord our God, Hosea 14. 4. I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from them; and in many other places; and beg he would teach thee experimentally to know what is meant by God's healing backslidings.

Sixthly, He knows that nothing in the world ever so wounded thee or went so near thy heart, as thy tempting and grieving of him hath done; and thou art resolved never to forgive thyself, though he do, no (as sometimes thou thinkest) not in Heaven.

Seventhly, He knows that thou art to this day wailing, and wondering, and waiting, to know wherefore thou wert so left unto thyself, and that thou art far from wiping thy mouth and slighting of it; thou canst not but think that God hath some design upon thee therein as he had upon *Hezekiab*, 2 Chron. 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart:* and little didst thou think when God first turned thy heart unto himself, there had been that in it which since hath broken forth from it, nor was ever any so deceived in thee as thou hast been in thyself, but art resolved now against that folly of trusting in thine own heart any more. *Prov. 28. 26.*

Eighthly, Ask him upon what terms he first entered upon thy heart; Was it not with a Commission there to stay, how ill soever treated or entertained? So says Christ, it was agreed on, *John 14. 16. And I will Pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever.*

Thou wouldst not for a World have him only upon the same account. The first *Adam* had him in his state of innocency, concurring meerly as a *third Person* in the Trinity, but by vertue of a relation to the *second*; and then he must never leave thee, he must not only *alight* but *abide* also, as upon the head, so upon the Members, *John 1. 32, 33.*

Ninthly, Say to him, hereby shalt thou know that he is God indeed, equal to the Father and the Son, and that though all the world should conspire against him to *un-God* him, yet shall his invincible patience, and insuperable Good-will, raise an everlasting *Pillar of witness*
in

in thy bosom, let who will cast him off, he shall be thy God for ever; *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquities*, Mich. viii. 18. is equally true of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

CASE IX. *Sense of strong Corruption.*

BUT still thy heart akes and is disquieted, to think that what's said of a man of great wrath, *Prov. xix. 19.* is also most true of thee, such an one must needs suffer punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again; he'll ever and anon bring himself into the briers; and this is thy case, though the sweet Spirit of God be willing to forgive thee former Offences, and to fetch thee off from thy Imbroilments, yet is he likely to have an heavy hand with thee, considering thy *corruptions* and temptations; thou art likely to run upon a new score, to run into new rebellions, and there will be no end of all his labour; yet in this case go and order thy cause before God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and fill thy mouth with Arguments.

1. Ask Him, Was not this one great end why our nature was taken into personal union with the divine, that the diseases of the one might be healed by the infinite virtue and purity and efficacy of the other? did Christ come only to cure the sicknesses of the body? or were not all these cures the types and representations of those he came to work upon the souls of sinners; sure such as touch Him by Faith, shall have their bloody issues stopped, and all other inward distempers cured: in the days of his flesh *he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*, Acts x. 38. and lamentable were our loss by his removal to Heaven, if from thence his virtue could not reach us; and if we were now on earth, thou art verily persuaded thou might'st have help from him; why not from Heaven?

2. Did He not die that sin might die and be destroyed? he was not only cloathed with our nature, but strip'd by the separation of soul and body (though not of the Godhead from either) that sin and our souls might

might be separated: why doth sin live, seeing Christ died?

3. Demand even of Justice, if Christ hath not fully paid thy ransom? why then art thou kept in bonds? holden with the cords of thy sins? the worst usage which the worst of men in this world are threatned with; *Prov. v. 22.* his own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be *holden with the cords of his sins*; the vilest dungeon without this, is a pleasant palace, a delightful garden, as was said by some of the blessed Martyrs of their prisons.

4. Complain that these corruptions do wrong, defile and outrage that nature which Christ now wears in Heaven, and hath exalted far above the brightest Cherub; for He and his are all of a piece, *Heb. ii. 11.* and this is a thousand shames and pities.

5. If there be any seed of God, any beginning of that everlasting work or sanctification in thee, thou art now become *a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, *Eph. v. 30.* (for Christ never took any but sanctified flesh upon him) and how then can he hide himself from his own flesh? he would not have us do so, *Isa. lviii. 7.* how can he endure to see his own flesh shamefully abused?

He who made a Law a man should not hide himself when he saw his enemy's beast sink down under his burden, the Ass of one who hated him, *Exod. xxiii. 5.* Doth he take care for Oxen and for Asses? and can he himself forbear to help up the Soul of one that loves him? and will he not help with him? or if thou art afraid to say thou lovest him, because thy heart is so little with him, yet to be sure there's a poor soul down, and will he not help it up? will he not help it? and that against those oppressors which are as well the enemies of his praise and glory as of thy peace and safety.

And surely these Canaanites are left in the Land, as it was in the figure.

To keep down pride, *Deut. vii. 22.*

To try whether we will follow the Lord or our lusts, *Judg. ii. 24.*

To

To teach us war, and to exercise our graces, *Judg.* iii. 1.

To make us to keep more above, upon the mountains, *Judg.* i. 34.

To become tributaries and do our drudgery, 1 *Kings* x. 21. God makes our corruptions do us some service, which our graces cannot do without them.

CASE X. *Fear of Affliction.*

BUT peradventure thou may'st think with thyself, that through grace (whereunto nothing is impossible) thou mayst be both pardoned and purified too in time, but it will cost thee dear: first, a world of *Afflictions* must be expected where there hath been such a World of Provocations, and yet remains such a mass of corruption; and these fears of what may come, take thee off from enjoying what is present: Go with this complaint to thy Judge, that these fears may be disarmed, and bound over, no more to molest thee; go fill thy mouth with Arguments: For who can say his mountain is so strong he shall never be moved? Or who can foretel or foresee the things that may befall him; even pardoning mercy itself is no fence against this flail of Affliction.

1. Tell Him whatever comes, 'tis thy desire to bear his Indignation, because thou hast sinned against him, *Mich.* vii. 9. and that thy stubborn uncircumcised heart may accept of the Punishment of thine iniquity, because, even because thou hast despised his judgments, and carried it as if thy Soul had abhorred his statutes, *Lev.* xxvi. 43. Nay,

2. Tell him that thou hadst rather be under the schooling of his children, than the sockering of his castaways, under the severe mercy of his discipline (as *Augustine* speaks of that of the Church) than under the impunity of those desperate lost creatures whom God hath thrown up as a lost case, and will not be at the cost to bestow another rod upon them, even his correcting rod as well as his supporting staff shall be a comfort to thee, *Psal.* xxiii. 4. no punishment like impunity.

3. Though

3. Though it be infinitely more eligible that way to be humbled and reformed than not at all, yet tell him, if he will be pleased to spare thee, 'twill be more for his honour to do it in the midst of prosperity, because this is more difficult and more unusual: *Jer. xxii. 21. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst I will not bear, this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.* Now what a glory will it be to him, to bore thine ear in the midst of thy prosperity.

4. As this will be more glorious for Him, so more *useful* to others, the examples of such a convert is much more conspicuous and illustrious; in miserable ones 'tis hard to distinguish between a devastation and reformation, between their trouble for sin, and for suffering, in persons not humbled and yet humble, outwardly happy and yet weaned from the breasts of sinful pleasures, 'tis very visible that 'tis not *absence* but *abstinence*; that they do not make a virtue of necessity, that 'tis voluntary not extorted; and besides men are far more forward to imitate the happy than the wretched and miserable, to write after a fair copy than one all blotted and blur'd, soiled and sullied by the tears and sweat of affliction, the examples only of such as are some way happy or eminent carry compulsion in them, *Gal. ii. 14.*

5. Tell Him however so he will go with thee thro' fire and water, according to his gracious promise. *Isa. xliii. 2. thou art not afraid to venture, thou wilt interpret it to be his affection as well as his faithfulness, his magnifying of thee, his setting his heart upon thee, Job vii. 17, 18. his utmost kindness unto thee, seeing he himself stiles it so. Jer. ix. 7. Behold I will melt them and try them, for what else shall I do, what more can I do for the daughter of my people?* Some affirm, if a knife or needle be touched with a Loadstone of an iron colour, it will cut or enter into a man's body without any sense of pain at all: 'tis true of afflictions well touched with the Loadstone of divine Love. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, Psal. xcvi. 12, 13.* This then is a blessed condition, when correction and instruction are linked together and thou

thou canst not be happy without it, nor hast thou been over-eager after deliverance, when in affliction thou hast enjoyed his precious presence.

CASE XI. *Sense of Extremity of Pain.*

BUT 'tis hard to keep in his mind when he comes to the trial, especially when God puts forth his hand and toucheth to the quick, when he toucheth the bone and the flesh, then (saith the devil of *Job*) he will never endure that, *he will curse thee to thy face*, *Job* ii. 25.

In extremity of pain when thy Spirit is ready to fail before him, and the Soul which he hath made; art apt to say in thine heart, where is all that Sweetness and Tenderness thou mad'st thy boast of? Where is now thy Fear, thy Confidence, the uprightness of thy ways and thy Hope? and this may be thy case, how strong and how healthful soever thou hast been hitherto.

Yet even then labour to order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with arguments, and if our hearts reproach us not, if they condemn us not for secret Atheists and notorious dissemblers, we may have boldness and freedom of speech in all these cases, 1 *John* 3. 21. and in this case it is a shameful thing for a professed Christian, to know no other way of complaint or cure than a beast doth, *Hos.* vii. 14. A beast when in pain will cry, and may be cured by time and remedies; a Christian indeed hath a Spiritual way of complaining, which affords more ease than the natural: therefore in case of pain,

1. Justify him, and tell him thou knowest that he exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth, *Job* xi. 6. tell him those parts that feel the pain, have deserved infinitely more than they feel; call to mind those very Times and Places wherein they have provoked the eyes of his glory; the wicked devices of thy head, the wretched desires of thy heart, the pollutions of thy hands, the swiftness of thy feet to do evil (only take heed of repeating those sins by any cursed titillation or delight in remembrance of them) confess the whole body

dy hath deserved to be laid upon the rack in hell, and never let down to all Eternity. Yet

2. Make bold to mind him how utterly *unuseful* thou now art unto him, unless he will fill and furnish thee with strength and patience to glorify him in suffering, now that he is not pleased to imploy thee in doing; and if so, though thou lye in Hell, there shall be never a devil in it to torment thee.

3. Ask him if he can take any *Pleasure* in thy pain? if that be agreeable to the incomparable sweetness of his only good nature? if that can be suitable to the bowels and Compassions of these *Relations* wherewith he hath condescended to array himself? did ever the harshest Parent beat a Child (how bad soever) all the day long, and all the night, or so long together without intermission? thus *Hezekiah* reasoneth, from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me? I reckoned till Morning (I thought then he would give over,) I thought though *sorrow may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning*, Psal. xxx. 5. but as a Lion, so will he break all my bones, from day even to Night wilt thou make an end of me, *Isa.* xxxviii. 12, 13.

Can this severity be consistent with the sweetest relations? And what are the bowels of all the Relations in the World to God's, but flints and Adamants?

Ask him then with this complaint of *Job*, *Is it good to thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands? Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about, yet thou dost destroy me: Remember I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me into dust again?* (wilt thou pound me into powder before my time?) *Job* x. 3, 8, 9, &c. Or if that it could be his pleasure and his pastime (which sure it is not,) yet ask him if thou art a fit match or mark for him? *Am I a sea or a Whale, that thou settest a watch over me?* *Job* vii. 12. There's a pride and a power worthy of his curbing and coping with, some Leviathan or Behemoth, may be a fit subject for him that made him, to make his sword approach unto, his bones are as strong pieces of brass, his bones are like Bars of Iron; *Job* xl. 18, &c. but mine
are

are not so, *Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh of brass?* Job. vi. 12. alas no, he knows the contrary, hath he not poured me out as *Milk* and curdled me like *Cheese*? which will soon crumble under his fingers, wherefore then hidest thou thy face; and holdest me for thine Enemy, wilt thou break a poor *leaf* driven to and fro, and wilt thou pursue the *dry stubble*? for thou *writtest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth; cease from me, and let me alone, that I may take Comfort a little,* Job x. 10.

And will he not be intreated? mind him that he himself hath told thee, that he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the *Children of men*, to crush under his feet all the *prisoners of the Earth*, Lam. iii. 33, 34. not the Children of men, much less then the Children of God, his own Children; and thou hopest thou dost look like one of them, yea, that thou art one of them.

Not the prisoners of the Earth, and will he crush either with his foot or his hand the free-born Citizens of *Heaven*, those whom the Son hath made free, and so are free indeed, Joh. viii. 36. and if thou art a prisoner. thou art *a prisoner of hope*, Zech. ix. 12. thou hast sometimes thought, that *he hath loosed thy bands*, and said unto thy Soul *go forth*, Isa. xlix. 9. and lxi. 1. and thou canst not yet cast away thy confidence.

4. Ask Him, Why did he take pleasure in the pains of his dear Son, in crushing and *bryising* of him as in a Wine-Press, Isa. liiii. 10. sure that work in itself was no such pleasing work unto Him, but only as it made way and gave vent to that which is his pleasure, the exercise of Love and Mercy; that was but a medium to this end, and in itself a bitter one to God Himself, save only as this sweetned it.

Now why did he *put him to grief* if he received no satisfaction thereby? were not his head, and heart, and hands, and feet, and sides tormented, that thine might be spared? surely the sins of all believers were *punished* and paid for in full, in and by their Surety, and are only *corrected* in themselves; though therefore thou hast cause to bewail and to be amazed at the naughtiness of that heart which calls for such rods; yet it cannot but

be a chearing to thee that God is not reckoning with thee, as if he meant to fetch his pennyworths, his compensations to his Justice out of thy smartings.

Lastly, Ask Him if he himself *smart* not in thy sufferings? If Christ Himself do not suffer and bleed afresh? If his Compassion do not almost renew and repeat His Passion, he has lost his old wont else; In all the afflictions of His People He was wont to be afflicted, (even before his Incarnation, when he had not those Bowels of a Man that now He hath,) *Isa.* lxiii. 9. And though no pain can have any place in Heaven, yet love in its perfection feels something by way of Sympathy, not only Analogous and proportionable, but infinitely more high and generous than we can think of.

Though therefore there be a far greater height of love expressed in his afflicting, than in his cockering and carking, yet beg he would moderate or withdraw His hand, considering whereof thou art made, and remembering that thou art but dust, and thou shalt either have ease and deliverance, or that which is far better, an ample participation in *his holiness*, *Heb.* xii. 10, 11, 12. and a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, *2 Cor.* iv. 17.

CASE XII. *Desertion felt, or feared.*

BUT may some poor soul say, 'twere well if I might escape with the smartings and sufferings of the outward man, with the pain of the body which is but the body of pain; the sorrow of the soul is the soul of sorrow, and either I feel or fear *desertion*; having found Him whom my soul loveth, I would fain have held him and not have let him go, *Cant.* iii. 4. I would not let him go without a blessing, nay, I would have the blessing and keep him too, his presence being the best of blessings, but woe unto me when he departs from me.

Now though this be the most darksome and dole-some condition that can befall thee, yet 'tis neither desperate nor unusual; Go therefore even in this case and order thy cause before him and fill thy mouth with

Arguments.

1. Tell

1. Tell Him, 'tis but fit indeed that he should assert his own Sovereignty, by coming or going when he pleaseth; but why should he take a pleasure to be a hiding God, where he is a Saviour, to be a stranger in his own Land, in *Emanuel's* land, and to be at his own house, as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, seeing he alone is the hope thereof, and the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble? *yet thou O Lord art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.* Thus *Jeremiah* pleads Chap. xiv. 8, 9.

2. Make bold to mind his Blessed Majesty of those many engagements made by Himself and Son, never to leave thee nor forsake thee: Shew him those promises, *John* xiv. 21. *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father,* and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him: and ver. 23. my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode with him,* and whether thou lovest Him or no, notwithstanding thy many practical denyings of him, thou canst with *Peter* appeal to Omniscience itself, let him judge; *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,* *John* xxi.

17. Nay, hath He not said, that He will not cast off his People, No not for all that they have done against Him, *Jer.* xxxi. 37. and if not for what they have done, what is there else that they need fear, 1 *Sam.* xii. 20, &c. Fear not, ye have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord; for *the Lord will not forsake his People; seeing it hath pleased the Lord to make you His People;* He can neither be inconsistent in His Love, nor so mistaken in His Choice as to repent thereof.

3. Tell the Son of Righteousness, 'tis true, thou canst neither bear His *Shinings*, nor *Eclipses*, but much less these, than those; thou hadst much rather chuse to be burnt up by his flames and embracings, than to be frozen up and starv'd in the shadow of his absence and withdrawings; thou hadst rather gaze out thine own eyes, than weep them out; wouldst rather chuse to die with *Moses* at the mouth of the Lord, have thy Soul suck'd out by a kiss (as some say his was) than to

pine away from day to day, through the hidings of his face and withholdings of his favour.

4. Tell Him, if thou hadst never known Him, thou couldst have been without him, at least without any present sense of sorrow for his absence; but now having tasted that he is gracious, in his favour is thy life, and his loving kindness is better than life, *Psal. xxx. 5. and lxiii. 3.* and thou canst not make a shift to be one day without him.

5. Tell Him, If the loss were total and final, 'twere perfect *Hell*, and the worst of *Hell*, the punishment of loss being concluded to be far greater than that of sense; and if it be but partial and for a time, for a moment (as he calls it, *Isa. liv. 7, 8.* a small moment, though thou thinkest it an Age) yet who can be content to be in *Hell*, in an *Hell* above ground, though but for a moment.

6. Tell Him, He had as good return at first as at last, for as till then thou art sure to have *no rest* thyself, so he is likely to have but little; Heaven is like to Ring out, and thou hast a warrant under his own hand, to bear thee out in such a restless importunity; not only the Watchmen set upon the Walls of *Jerusalem*, are never to hold their peace day nor night, but *all ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence*, and give him *no rest*, till he establish, and till he make *Jerusalem a praise in the earth*, *Isa. lxii. 6, 7.*

7. Ask him, Why was *Christ forsaken* by him, but that Christians might never be so: *Christ* himself expostulated the case, and put the question upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* *Mat. xxvii. 46.* and thou hopest those living words of His dying Son have made so deep an impression that they will never out of his mind, shall never be forgotten.

CASE XIII. *Exercised in Friends, Relations, Name or Estate,*

YET may some complain and say, God is pleased indeed to spare me both as to soul and body, but yet his hand is out against me, and lies sore upon me
in

in my relations, friends, name, estate, which are no mean ingredients, either as to the sweetning or imbittering, of my cup : yet in this case go to Him, order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*.

1. Doth he threaten the removal of some near and dear relations ? tell Him they are pieces of thyself ; and is he now about to rend the caul of thine heart, and hath not fitted thee for resignation ?

2. He knows that the *last corruption* mortified in his Children, is inordinateness of affection to relations ; when they come to die themselves, and are already dead to all things else in the World, yet still the heart hankers after these, this is next to the Soul, as the shift is to the body, and is last put off : and is it so difficult to die to relations, when we ourselves are dying, putting off from the shoar of this world, and launching into the deeps of eternity ; have we so much to do then to shake hands and bid farewell to our friends ? what is it then when we see them pluck'd from us, when the life of all passions and affections is whole and strong in us, scarce deaded at all to our enemies, to those things we ought to hate, much less to our friends, to those persons whom we ought to love ; beg him to consider and pity thee in this difficulty.

3. Tell Him, He knows thou tookest them as tokens and pledges of his *love*, and wer't wont to speak of them in thine Heart, in the Language of *Jacob*, Gen. xxxv. 5. *These are the friends, the children, the comforts, which God hath graciously given His Servant* ; and thou fearest now that he is about to take them away in *anger*, and the signification of the stroak is that which disquiets thee, (like the hand-writing upon the wall) much more than the stroak itself.

4. Tell Him (when they are gone or going) thou art resolved never to recruit with Creatures ; Ask Him if He would be pleased to stand in the breach and to fill up the gap Himself, he says he *offers* Himself thereunto, *Heb. xii. 7.* courting thee to accept of his company and supply ; and if he will make good his offer, he shall be better unto thee than ten of those relations, friends,

comforts, yea, than ten thousand such things as He first lent thee or put into thy hand to hold for him, and now hath seen it meet to call for, away from thee.

5. Tell Him, As for thy *Name* 'tis in his keeping, must have a resurrection as well as thy body, tho' the one deserve to rot as well as the other; and if his name were not concerned in it, thou wouldst neither trouble Him nor thyself about it, 1 Cor. iv. 3. with me it is a very small thing to be judged of men.

6. He knows that though thy liquorishness after Creatures hath cost thee dear, yet it hath been the endeavour of thy Soul *to live upon Him alone*, in the midst of all other Comforts, to make Him thy All, above All, with All, who shall hereafter be All, without All; and that in the mean time, thou mightest live upon him without other things; If it should please him to strip thee of them, as knowing that there was a worm at the root of those gourds, which would one day deprive thee of their refreshing shadow, and he knows that sometimes when friends have failed, though at first thou wert amazed, yet upon recollection thou hast rejoiced to find thyself laid at his door alone for help, and thou hast found Him alone All-sufficient for thee, and He hath done that alone which he would not do in *consort* with second causes.

Lastly, he knows how often thou hast offered Him (if he would send thee) to go after those antient servants and sufferers for His Name, *Heb. xi. 37, 38. to wander about in sheep-skins and goats-skins, so that leathern outside might be well lined with divine love; to wander in mountains, so thou mightest be nearer to Him, in deserts, so He would not desert thee, so He would not be a wilderness or a land of darkness to thee; in dens and caves of the earth, so they might be furnished and beautified, gilded and Glorified with His Presence, His precious All-sufficing Presence.*

And he makes but a bad bargain, who takes more of what is least, and is content to be put off with less of what is most, which thou wilt never be (through his Grace) while thou livest.

CASE XIV. *Disquietment from cross providences.*

YET thou mayst proceed and say, though he spare the main branches, I am often afraid of lopping by some particular *unexpected providences*; a little Center of fear or trouble, soon darkens the whole circumference of joy and Pleasure, and on a sudden, many times the whole Heaven is black with clouds and wind, when at first nothing appeared but a little cloud. *Sicut vola hominis*, like a man's hand, which one would have thought would easily have been blown over (as *Athanasius* said of the *Arian Heresy*, *Nubecula est, citò pertransit*) but it proves far otherwise, and who can say at all times as *Solomon* once did to *Hiram*, 1 Kings v. 4. *Now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent*; if not now yet thou knowest not how soon thou mayst meet with many adversaries, many evil occurrences: yet in this case go unto thy God, order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*.

Ask Him, if thy dependence be not on him alone, for direction, for success in all thine undertakings and concernments: He knows thou hast no other *Friend* to rely on for counsel or assistance, and with him the friendless and *Fatherless* use to find mercy, Hos. xiv. 3. because our faith honours him, he useth to honour it: *The King trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most high he shall not miscarry*, Psal. xxi. 7. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee*, Isa. xxvi. 3.

Now he is pleased sometimes to make our faith the rule of his favour, and as it were to give himself captive into the hands of our Faith, to be such unto us as we would have him to be: *Matth. vii. 13. Go thy way (saith Christ to the Centurion) and according as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Beg him to say unto thee; he knows for what thou hast believed on him.

2. Hath it not been thy manner to go to him, and beg him to go along with thee even in thine ordinary and *smallest* matters (unless thou hast been surprized)

and in these it is that men, for the most part, miscarry and sometimes stumble fatally, as *Adonijah* did in asking of *Abeshag*, and *Hezekiah* in shewing his Treasures; Men are jealous and timorous in great matters and dare not but carry them to God, but think that small ones are within their own mastery, they need not trouble him about them, and that ruins them, but it is not wont to be so with thee.

3. Thou dost not use after vows to make enquiry; to come to him with all thoughts made up before hand, fully resolved what course thou wilt steer, as the Jews did about their Journey into *Egypt*, no, but in an equibrious frame of Spirit, he may turn the Scale with a touch of his finger which way he pleaseth; dost thou use to let thy Father choose for thee, as being unable, unfit to choose for thyself, and can he choose amiss?

4. Ask Him if thou didst not cast thyself upon Him, beg Mercy and Direction in that very thing which hangs now like a Cloud over thine head, and threatens thee with Storms and Tempests; even *Saul* is afraid to engage without first arming himself by Sacrifice and solemn supplication, 1 *Sam.* 13. 12. But the Soul takes it ill to Miscarry when it hath done so: not forcing itself, (as *Saul* did) but acting in a spirit of ingenuity. It then expostulates with the Lord, as the *Shunamite* with the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 4. 28. *Did I desire a Son of my Lord? Did I not say do not deceive me.*

5. Did not thou think at first that the thing was from the Lord, and that he gave thee encouragement therein as *Jacob* with him in this very case, *Gen.* 32. 9, 12. *Thou saidst unto me return and I will deal well with thee, thou saidst thou wouldst do me good, and wilt thou now suffer my Brother to come to smite me (as I fear he will do) and the Mother with the Children?*

Nay, didst thou not begin to Rejoice in that Providence, in that Relation, in that Business as dropped from a Father's hand? Ask Him if he must now be ashamed of thy Hopes, and repent of thy rejoicings and the Good thoughts thou hadst conceived of Him? Shalt thou find a *stone* instead of *bread*, and instead of a *Fish* a *Serpent*? No, one who knows him better than so, hath assured.

assured thee of the contrary, *Luke 11. 10, 11, &c.* And therefore at the worst it shall but prove an *advantageous Affliction* to thee, it can never prove a *Curse*.

CASE XV. *Dread of Spiritual Judgments, hardness of Heart, Unprofitableness under the Means of Grace.*

BUT what will it avail me (may some sad soul say) That no Rod toucheth me in any of my outward concernments, if in the mean time I lie under the lash of *Spiritual Judgments*, much Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, Deadness, Coldness, Distractions, Insensibleness of spirit in Holy Duties; under Heavenly Ordinances, Barrenness, Unprofitableness, Unfruitableness to all the cost and care and pains that GOD bestows upon me. This is a Case indeed wherein thou hast need to bestir thyself, To order thy Cause before him and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*. Go tell him,

1. That of all Judgments he knows that spiritual ones are most dreadful though least sensible, these tho' *Judgments* from Him are *sins* in us, and Sin is the worst of Evils, nay, the only evil; These lay loads upon the *Soul*, the most noble and precious part, no matter if the carcass, the cabinet were defaced so the jewel were preserved.

These are Arguments of the highest Indignation, the saddest Symptoms, the most fearful earnest of Damnation.

These do evidence that there's no union with Christ, the end whereof is fruitfulness, no skreen betwixt the soul and wrath, *for the earth which (though it drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it) which beareth Thorns and briers is rejected and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,* Heb. 6. 7, 8. They who are not for fruit must be for fuel, if not for bearing for burning.

Plead therefore as for life, that (unless he meant to damn thee eternally,) he would make all his Ordinances helpful, sweet, successful, Precious and Profitable unto thee.

2. Ask Him who poured the oyl of Consecration upon their Heads, whose *appointments* are they? Whose Image

and Supercription do they bear? and urge, that it is not for his Honour that they should prove ineffectual, that thou shouldst go and come from the place of the holy and yet remain unholy, *Eccles. viii. 10.* that thou shouldst weary thyself with lugging at dry breasts, which hath occasioned so many in our days, (through their proud impatency) to lift their heels against them; No: let unusefulness be found written upon all Antichrist's *Inventions*, not upon any of Christ's *Institutions*.

3. Mind Him, that in the visible Creation, *all light* is a kind of *flame*, though very thin and exceeding subtil; 'tis undeniably true of the light of the Sun, which being contracted and thickned in a glass, is wont to burn; now why is it not so in the New Creation? art thou not a Child of the day? *1 Thes. v. 5.* is not the Sun of Righteousness risen upon thee? Why is there not *heat* proportionable to all the *light* that thou enjoyest? Why should thy hardness of heart be increased thereby, rather than abated? As the Earth is in a frosty night, though the Moon then walketh about in all her brightness.

4. Make bold to mind him, that such is the energy and efficacy of his Law of nature, that all *spirits* do move and stir in their appointed *seasons*; wine in the vessel is wont to work when the vine trees flourish; the Characters of some fruits imprinted on children, at the time when the same Fruits are in season, are of a more lively red than at other times, and in some persons do rise, and swell, and grow big like the fruit itself, Mulberries or the like; yea the stains thereof in linen, are said at that time to come forth, and not before; the cause is (besides the power of resemblance) the disposition of the Air at that season, which by the power of God's appointment, is fitly inclined to raise up the like spirits wherever they are.

And hath he not made as powerful Laws in matters of the invisible creation as of the visible? are there no spirits in his spiritual appointments? no Law to make our spirits move and stir in those seasons of Love and Grace? Why do the wonders of nature remain, when those of Grace seem to cease? yea we ourselves find
our

our spirits move and stir with a wonderful titillation and delight, at our near approach to some dear Relations; why should not our souls feel the same, when we draw nigh to our best Friends? Our dearest Father, sweetest Saviour only Comforter? *David* felt it so, *Psal.* cxxii. 1, 2. *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord, our feet shall stand within thy gates O Jerusalem.*

5. Mind him that 'tis one of his Crown Jewels, his peculiar prerogative to teach his people so as to profit, *Isa.* xxxviii. 17. *Cathedram habet in cælis qui corda docet*; He who speaks to the Heart speaks from Heaven, hath his pulpit there, one from the dead, cannot do it, an Angel from Heaven cannot do it, *Rev.* iii. 7. *ἡ μὴ ἀνοίγῃς* if he be not opening (though he do nothing to shut) no man can open.

But if he will be the teacher, it matters not what the scholar be; he hath no fellow at it, *who teacheth like him?* saith *Elihu*, *Job* xxxvi. 22.

6. Mind him of his promise, not only that he will teach, but passively that his people shall be taught, *John* vi. 45. especially the humble; and it may be thou canst say upon thine own observation, I never was proud of any thing, never boasted of any good expected, but I mist it, of any good enjoyed but I lost it; God will not suffer thee to be proud upon any terms, he will rather have thee humbled by thy sins, than proud of thy Graces; and seeing he hath laid thee and keeps thee so low, will he not teach thee?

7. Mind him of his practice all along from the creation to this day; which of all his Saints could not say as well as *David*, *Thou O God hast taught me from my youth up until now*, *Psal.* lxxi. 17. Nay he teacheth the husbandman, *Isa.* xxviii. 26. *For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him*: now put him to it and say, Lord, art thou the Plowman's God? and dost thou teach him? and wilt thou not be my God to teach and instruct me? to make me wise to salvation? for this also (if any thing) must come from him who is wonderful in counsels and excellent in working.

8. His *goodness* puts another argument into thy mouth; *Psal. cxix. 68. Thou art good and doest good* (and if ever thou wouldst do me a good turn) *O teach me thy statutes.*

9. Appeal unto him if it be not thy practice (as knowing the unfitness and unsuitableness of thine heart to any holy service) to cast it into his hand, *Prov. xvi. 1.* and thence to expect it (when the duty calls for it) of another tincture, put in kelter and fitted thereby for spiritual motion?

10. He knows it is the devil, and his agents and factors thy corruptions, which do distract and disturb thee; and would any parent endure that his *slave* should abuse his *child* before his face, when he is upon his knee for a blessing, or comes to receive his commands? Ask him how he can indure to see his execrable slave insult over thee before his face? and doth not rate away that ear, and pluck him off, and sling him down to hell from whence he came? why will he not do it? It is the reproach of *Senacherib's* Idol, that *they who came out of his bowels slew him there*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. in the house of his God, under his Idol's nose, in the very *act of worshipping*, 2 Kings xix. 37. and he could not protect him: Tell the Lord thy God, the only true God, the living God, it will not be for his honour that thou shouldst be continually baffled and abused by Satan, and those that come forth out of thine *own bowels*, when thou settest thyself to worship him, he looking on, who alone is able to rescue and relieve thee, whose Glory the Devil strikes at herein, as well as at thy peace and safety.

11. Tell Him, if he will allow thee nothing at present, but the comfort of *obedience* to sweeten thy attendance upon him, yet that shall not discourage thee, that shall not rid him of a customer; his work on earth as well as in Heaven, is both work and wages; not only for, but in keeping his commandments there is great reward, *Psal. xix. 11. It is joy to the Just to do Judgement.* *Prov. xxi. 15.* and through grace it is so in some measure to thy poor Soul.

12. Lastly, When at any time thou art afraid to go away

away from an Ordinance utterly unregarded, from a Sermon, from a Sacrament, from off praying ground, and no notice taken of thee : say secretly in thy heart, *Lord I am here* ; thy poor Client whom Thou knowest so well, lo here am I ; Not one Word ? not one look ? not one touch this day in this duty ?

Say with her in *Judg. i. 15. Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a South land, a dry land, give me also springs of water*, and thy Father will be as liberal as hers was, he will give thee the *upper springs* and the *lower springs* ; 'tis well he finds thee there, though thou dost not yet find Him, thou shalt in conclusion be no loser by it.

CASE XVI. *Fear that Prayer is not heard.*

BUT all these pleadings (may some doubting Soul say) for ought I know may prove in vain, for I have thoughts and oppressing fears sometimes, that a God so high, holy, and happy, is not at all concerned, minds not the *addressees* of a worm so woeful, so sinful, so full of distresses and distractions, no more than a man minds the movings or murmurings of flies and bees, which moves swiftest or hums sweetest, for we are infinitely less to Him than they are compared with us ; and sometimes I find no answer at all, or so strange and contrary, that my fears are strengthened and confirmed.

Now though this temptation cannot prevail far upon thee (at least not finally) if thou art a constant pleader with God, yet it is needful when it doth but shew itself, to go and order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with *Arguments* against it.

1. Call to mind how God Himself hath affirmed the contrary, and tell him thou darest not question the truth of his engagements, *Psal. cxxxviii. 6. Though the Lord be high yet hath he regard unto the lowly*, he doth not at all forget himself when he remembers thee ; Nay, he sets forth himself in all his Sublimity and Glory, when he professeth the greatest kindness and condescension to those who judge themselves least capable of it, *Isa. lxiii. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eter-*

nity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, here's enough to make all the creatures that should hear it exceedingly to fear and quake (as 'tis said of Moses, Heb. xii. 21.) and yet what follows? what a soft still voice after all this thunder? I dwell also with him that is of a broken and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, so that he who is brought below the condition of a Creature broken and crumbled to nothing may yet be a companion for this high and holy One, *Isa. lxvi. 2.* though Heaven be my Throne, and the Earth my Footstool; yet to this man will I look that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and that trembleth at my word: Ask him now, whether this be the presumption, the Device of any Creature, or his own discovery which he hath made of himself, and tell him with an Holy plainness and boldness, that he hath now *ensnared himself* (if thou mayst with Reverence say so) with the words of his Mouth, He cannot go back, and thou hast no Reason to think He hath any inclination so to do; *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the Humble, Psal. x. 17.* Ay, and He will regard the Prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer, *Psal. cii. 17.*

2. Tell Him 'tis true the distance is vast, and wide, and infinite, far above that betwixt thee and the silliest fly, which thou canst fillip to death at thy pleasure, yet he hath given thee a capacity of Communion with Him, which those *insects* have not with us: and thou dost often observe, that a parent is more taken with his little ones lisping and offering at words, than with all the Rhetoric of the most florid and fluent Orator in the world, *and like as a Father* hath bowels of tenderness towards his Children, so, yea infinitely more than so hath the Lord towards them that *fear him*, *Psal. ciii. 13.* plead then with *Nehemiah*, Chap. i. 11. O Lord I beseech thee let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name.

3. Tell him thy conscience, thine own Book as well as his, (the Scripture) assures thee, he takes notice every time thou sinnest against him, why not every time.

time thou prayest and sighest after him, *Psal. cxxxix.* first five verses, *O Lord thou hast searched me and known me, &c.* Hear what a great writer affirmeth, *Dr. Jackson,* 'Christ even as a man with his human eye, sees all the wrongs we do or suffer, hears all our prayers with his ears, records all our doings; because the hottest Fire on Earth cannot impart its heat to bodies ten miles distant, cannot the Sun to Bodies more than ten hundred thousand miles distant? Christ's glorified human nature, having personal union with the Son of God, may not be measured or bounded by other men's faculties or perfections.' *The Man Christ Jesus is Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5. and shall be Judge, Acts xvii. 31.* And if the man Christ Jesus hear thee, will he not answer Graciously? If He were on earth thou wouldst expect it.

4. Tell Him, that most men are quick of hearing, when any thing is said that *pleaseth* them, and ask him whether he be more forward to mind what's most contrary than what's most agreeable to him? that which gives occasion to execute vengeance, *his strange act, Isa. xxviii. 21.* or to exercise mercy, his delight and pleasure, *Mic. vii. 18.* he professeth to listen and hearken after the language of repentance, *Jer. viii. 6.* after holy conference, *Mal. iii. 19.* *The Lord harkned and heard it,* and thou hast no reason in the world to doubt it, *1 John v. 14, 15.* *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us, and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him, lix. 1.* Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but there's a great objection, *ver. 2.* *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* Well yet,

5. Tell Him, thou must not only go contrary to thy conscience but to thy experience also to suspect him: for thou canst not but acknowledge that many a time thy prayers have been nearer unto Him, *1 Kings viii. 59.* (as Letters are stuck in the window which we intend

to answer) many a time hath He been *nigh* unto thee in all the things thou hast called on him for, *Deut. iv. 7.* Never hadst thou more sensible Answers from a man than thou hadst from thy God; thou canst point to many a mercy as she did to her child, *1 Sam. i. 27.* and say, *for this mercy I prayed and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.* Many a time hast thou had that great privilege to be one of those that are near unto him, *Psal. cxlviii. 14.* and this *nearness* to God in prayer when thou hast come to thank him for mercies, it hath *renewed* their sweetness, it hath *exceeded* it, when to beg mercies *spiritual*, it hath been a pledge of them, a part of them; *temporal*, it hath been an evidence of a Grant of them, or of what's *as good*, yea itself hath been *better*; This experience thou hast had of *nearness* to God in Prayer, and it is not the Sin committing, but the Sin-regarding Sinner whose Prayer the Lord will not hear; *but verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer*, and therefore I hope I am not such an one in his account and estimation, *Psal. lxvi. 18, 19.*

It may be thou canst say, *in the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my Soul*, *Psal. cxxxviii. 3.* and that's the best experience of answer to prayer, and therefore thou canst not call his hearing in question, unless thou wouldst say with this *Complainant* (in the worst sense that can be put upon these words) *Job ix. 16. If I had called and he had answered, yet would I not believe that he had answered to my voice.* It looks indeed like the language of a most obstinate and invincible unbelief; as when a man will not believe his Petition granted, though he see it granted, but it is rather the language of submission and self-denial, though I speed never so well in my pleading, in my prayers, yet I will never believe that 'tis for any worthiness in me or them, no 'tis not to my voice, but to the voice of a good Friend of mine, my Mediator that God hearkens, and for his sake it is that he so Graciously answers. Wait therefore patiently for the Lord, and he will incline unto thee and hear thy cry,
Psal.

Pfal. xl. 1. He never yet prepared any heart to pray, but he also caused his ear to hear, Psal. x. 17.

CASE XVII. *Fear that God can never take any special delight to such a polluted piece.*

YET may the Believing sinner find cause of complaining and say, things may and do run smooth, and God is many ways kind unto me, yet it can take no place in my Heart that ever he can take any *special delight* in one that hath been so stained, so corrupt; Sure Christ himself after such pollutions, provocations, prevarications, abuse of so much light and love, will never look nor speak so kindly as formerly, or as he would have done, had it not been for these disservices and disobligements which I have put upon him; yet try him and order thy cause before him: Go fill thy mouth with *Arguments*, in all humility.

1. Ask the Lord Jesus if it be not his work to *reconcile*, and is the Reconciler himself so hard to be reconciled? is the wrath of a Lamb so terrible? indeed when the great day of his wrath is come it will be so, and who then shall be able to abide it? But this is not thy case yet: mind him, that the Wisdom which is from above is *gentle and easy to be intreated*, Jam. iii. 17. and shalt thou not find the essential Wisdom of the Father to be so? is it so where there is but a drop, and not so where there is the whole Ocean? It is the sickly Child that hath most need of being dandled upon the knee, *Isa. lxvi. 12.* The heart of Christ is as fit a Receptacle for our sorrows of all sorts, as the eye is of colours. (as one saith) and is it shut up in endless displeasure against thee only; can any dregs of wrath settle there; unless towards the vessels of wrath? But *Zeph. iii. 17:* *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.* And what more can be said to assure thee of his delighting in thee?

2. Doth not the sweet Savour of Christ's sacrifice, the odour of his intercession, so diffuse itself and fill Heaven, that the stench of thy sins cannot enter? surely

ly were it not for that perfume, God could never endure the stinking dunghill of this World so near him, to be as a smock in his nostrils all the day.

3. Plead what Christ himself puts into thy mouth, *Matth. xviii. 13.* that the owner of the flock, looks with more joy, and pleasure, and delight, upon a poor stray sheep that is recovered than upon the whole flock that never ran that hazard; and hath not Christ a long time had thee in his Arms, in his Bosom, upon his Shoulders, to bring thee back to his fold and favour?

Isa. xl. 11. Luke xv. 5. 'Tis a recovering Church and people which Christ is so taken with, and terms alone for delights, *Cant. vii. 6.* one that had been forsaken and desolate whom the Lord is said to delight in, *Isa. lxii.*

4. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken and desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee; 'Tis to a reforming people, that the Lord engageth, that all Nations shall call them blessed, for ye shall be a delightful land saith the Lord, *Mal. iii. 12.* And is not Reformation that which thy soul laboureth and longeth after.

'Tis a repaired a re-edified Temple, that the Lord promiseth to take pleasure in, *Hag. i. 8.* And is not this the work which his Spirit is about in thee, to raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen down.

'Tis certain he taketh no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, surely then he taketh pleasure in the life of him, who through his abundant rich grace in Christ Jesus recovereth, *Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11.* Therefore O thou Son of Man speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye spake, saying, if our Transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die O house of Israel?

4. Ask whether thou art looked on as in thyself, or as in Christ, in thy surety, thy second self, thy head, thy husband? And a fair face gives the denomination of beautiful to the whole person and so makes it a delightful

lightsome Object: 'Tis only his comeliness put upon thee must make thee lovely.

5. Ask whether he look on thee as in thy present state and station, or as he shall see thee, (after a little while) to all eternity? for to him who sits in that high Tower of Eternity, there's nothing past nor to come, but all things are alike in one *perpetual NOW*, present before him; now within a while Christ will present to Himself (that he may take a full view of her) *and then to His Father, a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing, but holy and without blemish*, Eph. v. 27. and if now he view thee in that eternal Glass, he may well say, *thou art fair my love, there is no spot in thee*, Cant. iv. 7.

6. A Supper, a feast is for delight and cheerfulness, and even till Supper time, doth Christ wait to be gracious, till the shadows of the Evening be stretched out, *till his head be wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night*, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and be with me*. Now wouldest thou not fain have such a guest who always brings his cost with him? who is both guest and entertainment? Doth not thy soul cry out to him, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?* Gen. xxiv. 31. Yea, if thou canst not get open the door, art thou not unfeignedly desirous that he who hath the key of David would open it? nay, rather than fail *break it open*, that so the King of Glory might come in and Sup with thee.

7. Tell Him, it is infinite mercy that now and then thou feelest his quickening, though thou shouldst never enjoy his comforting, his ravishing presence any more while thou livest in the world; Nay, there's always some comfort in the sense of his quickening presence; Nay, he knows the posture of thy soul to be in some measure the same with that of David's, 2 Sam. xv. 26. *if he thus say, I have no delight in thee*, (though that word break thy heart) yet here am I, absolutely at his dispose, he can do me no wrong, *let him do with me as it seemeth good unto him*. God must be weary in delight-
ing.

ing in himself, Son and Spirit, when he delights not in this frame, which is the work thereof; if the Heaven above were brass sure the earth below would be iron, if there were no yeildings in his heart towards thee, sure there would be none in thy heart towards him, thou couldst never delight thyself in the Almighty, if he took no delight in thee; they draw back unto *perdition* in whom his soul takes no pleasure, *Heb. x. 38, 39.* my soul saith he, loathed them, and their soul abhorred me, *Zech. xi. 8.*

CASE XVIII. *Fear of unserviceableness.*

AND yet a generous, a noble minded Christian may be ready to say; all this cannot, ought not, fully to satisfy me, though the Lord admit me to much sweet secret communion with him (for which I can never be sufficiently thankful) yet if he will not honour me so as to use me, and make me some way *serviceable* in my generation, this is for a lamentation and ought to be so unto me; and this is that I fear, that I shall prove but a dry tree, an empty vine, bring forth no Fruit, do no good, neither find God working with me, nor be admitted to work with God, as 'tis said of *Jonathan*, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, *for he hath wrought with God this day, 1 Sam. xiv. 4.* so doth every good warrior, every good Magistrate, and that's his greatest comfort, Glory and safety, that he works with God, and God with them.

So *Paul* speaks of himself and his fellow-labourers in the Ministry; *we then as workers together with him, 2 Cor. vi. 1.* But I fear I must never have the honour of that Title whatever my calling or capacity be, for it was not only his way in the old Testament, in the old Temple, but 'tis threatned in that Gospel-vision, *Ezek. xlv. 10, 11, 12, &c.* That they who have strayed far from him in times of temptation and epidemical Apostacy, shall bear their iniquity, their shame, and their abominations (that is, some sad reward and remembrancer thereof) and though admitted to the enjoyment of many precious privileges, yet must be banished from the
nearest

nearest approaches, and highest services, 'tis exprest in the strain and stile of the Old Testament; but is intended and calculated for the Meridian of the new, and reaches not only Ministers but all Professors, all those who are now the royal *Priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. Rev. i. 5. and even amongst good people, where is the man that is able to bear, being laid aside and cast off at the end of the stage, and to see fresh instruments chosen? what is it else imbitters so many spirits? and how shouldst thou be able to bear such a trial, either to fall from thy standing, or do no good though continued in it, which of the two is the worst by far: if ever this be thy case, Go order thy cause before him and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*, Though guilty of many strayings from him.

1. Tell Him, thou perceivest it is not his will to destroy thee; if the Lord were pleased to kill thee, he would not have accepted an offering at thine hand, *Judg. xiii. 23.* neither would he have shewed thee all these things which he locks up from so many thousands, and yet hath acquainted thee with them; thou canst look him in the face, and say with the Prophet, *Hab. i. 12. Art not thou from everlasting O Lord my God, mine holy one, I shall not die*: Thou art the King eternal, and swayed not by time accidents but by eternal considerations, thou changest not, and therefore I am not, I shall not be consumed, *Mal. iii. 6.* Now then,

2. Plead upon this ground and tell him, it is not so much for his *honour* only to keep thee alive and make no use of thee; to preserve thy soul, only as salt to preserve the body, but do no service; and if thou hadst help to do all that is commanded or can be expected of thee in thy place, is not thy Soul prepared to say, thou art an *unprofitable servant*, Luke xvii. 10. and never open thy mouth more by way of boasting.

3. Mind him, that through his grace some sad sinners have proved most shining Saints, as in Scripture the children of women long barren have proved most eminent Instruments in Church and Common-wealth, of *Sarah*; *Isaac*; of *Rachael*, *Joseph*; of *Hannah*, *Samuel*; of *Manoah's* wife, *Sampson*: of *Elizabeth*, *John the Baptist*;

Baptist; so amongst sinners, some that came in late into the vineyard, have plied their hands, and laboured more abundantly than they who were admitted before them: 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. *Abimaaz* out-runs *Cushi* (though he set out after him) and comes to *David* before him; and if ever a soul had need to redeem the time, and fetch up what hath been lost, thou much more; and it will be to the praise of the glory of his Grace if he will help thee so to do.

4. He knows that thou art now in a way of purification and purification, and therefore it will be no dishonour to him, now to use and employ thee; nay he hath published it by the pen of his Apostle, that if a man *purge himself from these* (from the pollutions wherewith he hath been defiled) *he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and made meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work,* (and thou askest no more,) 2 Tim. 2. 21. They who will not be reduced and made better, are often against their wills reduced and made lower, if not utterly cashiered and dismissed from further service, but he that can plead the former may escape the latter, as having now (through Grace) prevented the Lord, and saved him a labour.

5. Ask Him, if he did not *call* thee and lead thee to thy present station, and will he now leave thee, to wither like a bulrush in the mire, and vanish away in utter unserviceableness? Who in the way of God can take unto himself the honour of Magistracy or Ministry, or any other way of usefulness, *but he that is called of God* thereunto, *as was Aaron*, Heb. 5. 4. and yet thou desirest to be prepared to justify him, though he proceed with thee as with *Eli's* house, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy fathers should walk before me: but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed; and thou hast been too often guilty of despising him.*

6. Ask if he remember not how thou didst often beg him never to trust thee with advantages, with opportunities; unless withal he would give thee an heart to be

be faithful and fruitful in the improvement of them? Hast thou not prayed (upon these terms) even against power and riches? lest thou shouldst be full and deny him, and say, *who is the Lord?* prov. 30, 8, 9. Hast thou not been in this regard more afraid of riches, honour, greatness, than their contraries? yea sometimes more afraid to live than to die; fearing lest thou shouldst not live unto him and to his service? loath therefore hast thou been to launch into the world again, after thou hast been laid up by some sickness.

7. How often hast thou desired since thou camest into the road of opportunities (in sense and fear of unanswerableness) rather to be removed than to fill up a room, and incumber the ground, and keep out others that might be more useful? and will he neither remove thee nor improve thee? neither cut thee down nor make thee fruitful?

Lastly, Tell him plainly that passage in *Rom. 5. 20.* *Where sin abounded grace did much more abound,* makes thee (being now found of him in a way of Faith and Repentance) not only not to fear extraordinary judgments, but even to look for extraordinary Favours; more love unto him, more Humility, more Holiness, more watchfulness; and by these, more than ordinary usefulness and Serviceableness in thy Generation, let him put or place thee where he pleaseth: it is not his disposition to *upbraid*, *Jam. 1. 5.* and therefore thou expectest he should give *Liberally* of that wisdom to thee, which may make thee serviceable in thy station.

CASE XIX. *Fear of being cast off at last.*

AFTER all this there may yet be a secret *Achan* in the Camp, which will be fingering the Accursed thing (unbelief), a *Jonah* in the Ship, which will be raising new tempests, and that is a Fear lest God at last should turn his back upon thee, and thou be found amongst those that are Deceivers of their own Souls, being *turned into hell*, when it seems their looks (though nothing else) were towards Heaven; if ever this be
thy

thy case, hye thee to God presently; Go fill thy mouth with *Arguments*.

1. Complain against thine own heart, so far as there is any mixture of unbelief in this Fear; confess that as to God it is an unworthy jealousy, and thou hast need with *Gideon* to cry to him for *mercy* to pray that his *anger* may not wax hot against thee, for asking him so many signs, *Judg.* 6. 39. considering how often the fleece hath been wet and the floor dry already to give thee satisfaction.

Yet when thou lookest downward there is misery enough, and matter enough to justify all thy Fears, and to move him to pardon, yea to sanctify them unto thee, especially considering that thy *All* is at the stake, and that it is Eternity, Eternity, Eternity that is before thee; that vast Gulf of Eternity; and if thou art mistaken in thy confidence, thou art lost irrecoverably to all Eternity: this may move him to pity rather than to anger; and to say to them that are of a *fearful heart*; *Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come and save you, Isai.* 35. 4.

2. For thy further Establishment ask him if he have not made all as sure as Grace can make it? yea, it is therefore *all of grace*, that the promise might *be sure to all the seed*, *Rom.* 4. 16. as sure as infinite Love, Infinite Wisdom, infinite Power, can make it, and thou darest it as thou dost Hell itself, to make the God of all Grace and Truth a Liar, 1 *John* 5. 10. to add to all thy other evils that grand abomination of *unbelief*, which puts more affronts and scorn upon him than all other sins whatsoever.

3. Ask if all the spirits of just men now made perfect will not confess the Mercies of Christ to be sure Mercies, *Acts* 13. 34. and that he (as *Boaz* saith of *Ruth*) *showed them more kindness in the latter end, than at the beginning*, *Ruth* 3. 10. and that *having loved his own which were in the World he loved them to the end*, *John* 13. 1. and reserved the best Wine for the last, *the last Grapes* (especially in Christ's vineyard) *yield the sweetest wine*; David makes it obvious to any man's observation, *Psal.* 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright:*

upright: he goes current for a perfect man) for the end of that man is peace. And even a Balaam is forced to acknowledge it, that there is a desirableness in the death, in the latter end of the righteous, Numb. 23. 10. Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my latter end be like his.

4. If yet thou fearest as to thine own particular, ask if the holy Ghost (who makes it his trade *to help infirmities*, Rom. 8. 26. and hath helped thee in thine all thy life long) ask if he will not then help thee when thou art most infirm? Nothing but a lump of infirmity and weakness? surely then, in thy greatest need he will not fail thee.

Lastly, Tell him, he knows why thou wouldst so fain be with him in his Heaven, not because thou fanciest it a *Turkish Paradise*, or a *Paganish Elifium*, abounding with Carnal or Corporal pleasures, not only because thou wouldst escape everlasting burnings (tho' he himself cannot blame thee for aiming at this, seeing he commands thee by all means possible to endeavour it;) But thy soul longs incessantly to go to Heaven, because Heaven is the Land of *Hallelujahs*, and thou wouldst fain be thankful, really thankful?

Heaven is the Land of Love, and thou wouldst fain take thy fill of love, in loving and being beloved; in loving as thou art loved, without intermission, without interruption, eternally, and so be ever with Christ, which is by much *far better*, Phil. 1. 23. All these meet daily with a thousand hindrances and incumbrances, which make thee sick of earth and sigh for Heaven, Groaning within thyself with that blessed Apostle (who had once been there) 2 Cor. 5. *For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven.*

Hinderances and Incumbrances, which make a Hell above ground, not to be endured by any honest heart, and how much more intollerable then is the nethermost Hell, for there is never a nook, never a corner in it, where a poor sinner might weep eternally, without blaspheming, without hearing blasphemies, without hating of God, without sinning against him: He
knows

knows how often thou hast told him, if there were, how much more quietly thou couldst accept of the punishment of thine iniquity there, and there justify him, and there bewail thy folly and madness, and lament the loss of him for evermore. But to lose him, and all love to him, and to be sinning against him eternally, this cannot be consented to, but by a Creature damned already, though above ground; nothing therefore short of Heaven can satisfy thee, or ought so to do; and if upon these Terms thou canst not be admitted into his Rest, sure he will have but little, who went *thither to prepare a Place for thee.* John 14. 2, 3.

This Hope then we have as an Anchor of the Soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the Vail, whither the Fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus made an High-Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, Heb. 6. 19, 20. Thus Building up yourselves in your most holy Faith, and Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your selves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life, Jude 20. 21.

CASE XX. *Intercession for others: With Complaints concerning many Things which are amiss in our Times.*

BUT hast thou not a Good Mind (before parting) to speak a Good Word for others also? This hath been constantly the way of the Spirit of Adoption. When David came before the Lord upon the saddest Occasion that ever his Soul was acquainted with when He was most full of his own Concernments, and had most cause of Fear that his appearing for others might do harm rather than good, yet then he ventures to drop a word for Sion, and remembers Jerusalem, Psal. 137. 6. amidst his greatest grief, as well as he prefers her before his chiefest joy. *Do good in thy Good Pleasure unto Sion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem,* Psal. 51. 18. What his Sins had weakened, and attempted to Ruin, He endeavours to strengthen and Repair by his Prayers; and seldom do ye see him rise from off His knees before He had pleaded the Church's Cause, and oftentimes he makes that his only errand, as you may

may find by several *Psalms*, penn'd for no other purpose.

Nay, many times the best Pleaders feel not their Hearts warm in the Work, till they come out of the narrow circle of their own personal Concernments, and launch into the business of the body of Christ, and then are their Hearts fixed by the spirit of Grace and Supplication, the great Soul of that Body.

But now a-days many praying Persons can find little to say, unless by way of complaint concerning the publick; be it so, you were told at the first that the Word here translated *Arguments* signifies *Complaints* also; if then thou canst make the Cause of the Publick thine own (as thou oughtest to do,) Go order thy Cause before him, and fill thy mouth with *Arguments*.

1. Plead for his poor *persecuted* People all the World over, ask if it be nothing to him to see the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus Christ, spilt like water upon the ground even to this day, in *Piedmont*, *Poland* and other places? are not the eyes of his glory weary of such sad spectacles? ask if there be not with them, even with them sins against the Lord, and if the Rage wherewith they have slain his Servants reach not up to Heaven, *2 Chron.* 28. 9. it was wont so to do in former times? Complain that their Bones are scattered at the Grave's Mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth Wood upon the Earth, *Psal.* 141. 7. and ask if he look not on to require it? When shall the Earth disclose her Blood, and no more cover her slain?

2. Complain that there's nothing visible towards a Reckoning with that drunken *beast*, which makes itself drunk with the Blood of the Saints as with sweet Wine; nay he seems of late to blow upon some Enterprizes level'd at them, and to shine upon the Counsels of the wicked. Ask him when shall those *forty and two Months* be expired (for Men miss it in their calculations and conjectures) when shall the Mountains flow down at his Presence, (and the seven Hills amongst the rest) when shall the powers of the Earth melt like Wax before the fire, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of the whole Earth? *Why is his*

Chariot so long a coming, why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot *? Mind him that the Harvest of the Earth is not only ripe, but even dried up and withered, *ἐξηραίνθη ὁ σπορίσμος τῆς γῆς*, *Rev.* 14. 15. compared with *Matth.* 13. 6. and 21. 19. A wonderful expression of his Patience; but how long Lord Holy and True? when, oh when shall it yet once be! Ask him if his Soul takes any pleasure in them, that he thus long continues them.

3. Cut scores with the poor *Jews*, we are many a prayer behind hand with them; when shall the Redeemer come unto *Sion*, and turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*, *Rom.* 11. 26. when will he *lift up his Feet to those perpetual desolations*, *Psal.* 74. 3. to the Mountains that have lain *always* waste, (he speaks one would think, as if he himself thought the time very long) when shall the receiving of them be as Life from the Dead? tell him, we hear as yet of no Noise, no shaking at all in the valley of dry Bones, no coming together of the bones, bone to his bone; and yet how much of the glory of God, and good of Men; how much of that Treasure is imbarqued in this Bottom? when shall Saints and Nations be *Synonyma's* and *Termini convertibiles*, as is implied, *Rev.* 15. 3. King of Nations, and yet 'tis translated, King of Saints, as if at that time Saints and Nations should be of an equal extent and latitude.

4. Beg a watering upon his *Plantations* abroad; there are many precious Souls worthy of thy Remembrance, many poor Souls that need it, many praying Souls to whom thou owest it, many pleading Souls who will repay it; therefore you that have escaped the miseries that have befallen others, remember the Lord (his Concernments

* *Rev.* 17. 6. Though the thousand years, *Rev.* 20. 2. were granted to begin at the time of *Constantine's* degree, *An. Dom.* 311. and to expire, at the rising of the *Ottoman* family, *An.* 1310. and the Devil then let loose again, yet must he have no long time to play reekes in the world, as appears by comparing *Rev.* 20. 7. with the 10 *ver.* See *Dr. Hamond* in *Loc.*

cernments and People) afar off, and let *Jerusalem* come into your mind, *Jer.* 51. 50. Many have Friends and Relations with whom they enjoy little Communion in this World, pray ye may meet at the right Hand of Christ, never to part in the next.

5. Complain unto him of that spirit of *Prophaneness*, which yet domineers in our Lands, and over the generality of our Nation, though he hath loved our Nation, and hath wrought such Salvation for us, as can no where be matched, save in the story of *Israel*; he hath given some into our Hands, others under our Feet, (I need not name them) sure of all the World *Englishmen* are under the most powerful obligations unto Holiness; but alas, how ill do we requite the Lord, like a foolish People and unwise: Oh pray that Christ may indeed sprinkle many Nations, and ours among the rest, in a special manner, with his Blood and Spirit, that we may yet become *a peculiar People zealous of good Works*.

6. Press Him to cast out that *unthankful* Spirit, wherewith so many are possessed even to a strange degree of distemper that hath befallen us, which is said of Egypt, the Lord hath mingled a Perverse Spirit in the midst of us, which causeth us *to err in every work as a drunken Man staggereth in his vomit*, *Isa.* 19. 14. We are ready to reel and dash one against another continually, many abusing, many despising all their present mercies, though but a few years ago, the crumbs of that loathed *Manna*, which now fall from our tables would have relished as most precious priviledges, worthy to be purchased at the rate of the utmost hazards and hardships; peevishness keeps many from praying for their Magistrates, and how can they look for good by them who sin in ceasing to pray for them, *1 Tim.* 2. 1, 2. what would that blessed Man if now alive say unto us, who so exhorted in *Nero's* time, and because he knew Men would be backward, he backs his commands with *Arguments* from the benefit, that redounds to the Church and from the acceptableness of this practice to God, *making supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all Men, for Kings and for all that are in authority*, *1 Tim.* 2. 1, 2.

7. Ask when that unclean spirit of *error*, *blasphemy* and *delusion*, shall have its pass (according to his promise, *Zach.* 13. 2.) and be sent packing out of our Lands? Some, not of the worst People, simple souls (*ἄνατοι*, as the Apostle calls them, *Rom.* 10. 18. have been misled hereby; and he hath said, *They that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine*, *Isa.* 29. 24. they that erred, and they that murmured, the holy Ghost ranks them together, as being of one feather; it seems there is no small affinity between the erroneous and the murmurers; but pity and pray for those who like *Abshalom's* two hundred, follow their leaders in the simplicity of their hearts.

8. Bewail before Him, that woeful, wilful, affected, Soul-murdering *Ignorance*, which as a veil covers so many hearts and faces, notwithstanding all the means of light afforded us: there are indeed too many dark places even in all the three Nations (in *Ireland* especially) which are full of cruelty; but alas how many are there in the midst of our *Goshens* without Christ, without God in the world, meer Atheists, as the Apostle calls them, *Ephes.* 2. 12. *ἀθεοί ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, without any inward appetitive acquaintance with God, without any powerful, experimental, practical knowledge at all.

When shall the day dawn, wherein the *deaf* shall bear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity, and out of darkness, *Isa.* 29. 18. when will the Lord again make bare his holy arm? and spread forth his hands in the midst of our Congregations (to pull in Souls unto himself) as he that swimmeth stretcheth forth his hands to swim?

When will he smell in our Assemblies a savour of rest, and take pleasure in our solemn meetings, as in the days of old? how long shall all his poor ministers complain, that conversion work hath a stop put to it every where?

9. Deal earnestly with him about the compounding and compromising of our *differences*, *distances* and *divisions*

visions, which have given such a wound to religion, opened such a gap to Satan, which every one complains of, and yet helps to widen; beg that all the children of light may walk more in the light as he is in the light, and then shall we have fellowship one with another, 1 John 1. 7.

Beg he would put it into the hearts of all His people, to imitate that good pattern, *Judg.* 1. 1, 2, &c. which doubtless waits for a spiritual accomplishment as well as all other things which happened to them in figure. *Judah* hath the priority given him, *jure divino*, by an Oracle from Heaven, *Judah should go up first, Behold I have delivered the Land into his hand*, and yet hereupon he despiseth not the aid and assistance of his brethren, but invites *Simeon* his brother to engage with him against the common adversary, and promiseth the like assistance unto him, and speeds never a whit the worse for it, but the better; God is so far from being offended with this practice that he blesteth it exceedingly, and delivered up the common enemy into their hands; thus would he deal by us as to our spiritual enemies, could we unite to engage against them, and leave our pickings and carnal contendings to overtop and supplant and impose upon one another.

10. Lastly, prefer one Bill of complaint more in a case which few think of, notwithstanding all our boastings and pretensions to a thorough reformation, and that's this: Few Men now a-days do honour the Lord with their substance,* few look at this as a duty to consecrate any part of their gain unto the Lord, or of their substance to the Lord of the whole Earth, but carry it as if they were turned *Independents* indeed, and did not depend no not upon God himself, or as if God

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himself

* *Prov.* 3. 9, 10. *Donum est integritas animi.* God by exacting this Tribute tries the sincerity of our love, faith, obedience; when the *Israelites* would not endure the sight of him, who came to demand the Tribute, it was a sure sign of their total and final revolt and defection, it was then high time for *Reboam* to get him home.

himself had lost his propriety, and there were now no rent-penny, no acknowledgment due unto him, save such an one as costs us nothing; surely God from the beginning reserved and claimed a part due to himself, who gave the whole, and whatever there was besides; this also was in the sacrifices of *Cain* and *Abel*, an acknowledgment that God hath a right in every Man's goods; afterwards he publish'd and put in his claim more peremptorily, *Exod. 22. 29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the first born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Non tardabis, Thou shalt not delay*, this implies an antient usage, this is no new thing, but a Law of confirmation, and yet this was before the *Levitical* institution, *Lev. 27. 30. And all the tythe of the Land, whether of the seed of the Land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.* It is the Lord's, it is his already, and had been so from the beginning of the world, and he now appoints the *Levite*, the *Stranger*, the *Widow*, and the *Fatherless* to be his Rent-gatherers or Receivers General, *Deut. 26. 12, 13. When thou hast made an end of tything all the tythes of thine increase, the third year, which is the year of tything, and hast given it unto the Levite, the Stranger, the Fatherless, and the Widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled.*

Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the *Levite*, and unto the *Stranger*, to the *Fatherless*, and to the *Widow*, according to all thy commandments, which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them*.

'Tis due to him, *quasi Regale vectigal*, as a royal revenue, and he doth *proprio jure credere*, (saith *Calvin*) when he thus disposeth of it; But where's the defect, the

* 1 *King. 12. 18.* And 'tis observ'd, that Christ tho' he reprov'd all sins, punished none, but that of sacrilege and prophanation of holy things; what will he do, when he comes as a judge to call us to an account for all our receipts and returns.

the default (may some say) where's the irregularity to be complained of? I wish trial were made whether it may not be proved (if the point were well studied, but I shall only hint it) that the * tenth part (or other proportion) of every man's increase, acquisitions, improvements, and incomes, is due unto the Lord even to this day: I am far from thinking or saying that it is due unto the Ministry or to any sort of Men, but that it is due and ought to be dedicated to God, and to the everlasting Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, by way of thankful acknowledgment to God for the same, a tenth which even the Ministers and the *Glebe* itself ought to pay, and so ought to be expended in the supporting of publick worship, in the relieving of the poor at home and abroad, under the rage of persecution in other Countries, and in the education of poor Children, the advancement of learning (that inestimable jewel) and other pious uses†. And would every Man that abounds make such a Purse, and account it *depositum pietatis*, as a sacred Treasury or Corban not to be opened but for pious uses; how many necessitous Parents, perishing Orphans, poor aged People, Persons ruin'd by Fire, Shipwrack, or the like, might speedily be relieved? There is no pious Person but judges something due this way, and the Holy Ghost calls even a Man's Charity due debt, *Prov. 3. 27. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy Neighbour, go and come again, and to*

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Tomorrow

* *Unusquisque de quali ingenio aut artificio vivit, de ipso decimam Deo in pauperibus vel in ecclesiis donet, Aug. de rect. Cathol. convers. To. 9. Fol. 250.* Thus did the primitive Christians, *Modicam unusque stipem aponit, &c.*

† *Hæc quasi deposita pietatis sunt, nam inde non epulis, &c. sed egenis alendis, humandisque & pueris ac puellis ve ac parentibus destitutis, naufragis, &c. Ter. Apolog. Quicquid Clerici habent, pauperum est, Hier.* In case of necessity, of extremity, God's Command makes relief due unto others, makes them owners, masters, of our superfluities; not that they may take it by force, but that we must give it freely. *Trappe on Prov. 13. 27.*

Morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee, verse, 28. What we call giving, God calls paying; What we call Charity, He counts due Debt; all the question is about the *Quantum*, how much ought thus to be dedicated to God, and to fix it upon the tenth part, is neither Popish nor Legal, or Jewish, but a known Truth, or Duty long before the oldest of these was heard of in the World; This was no *natural* but an *adoptive* Child of *Moses*, nor was it a Type or Ceremony, as Sacrificing was; (which was also before the Law) for then there must be some spiritual substance typed out by it, but it was practised by the light of Nature and Law of Reason, Moral Law, and Law of Nations every where. Why else did *Abraham*, Gen. 14. 20. Pay Tythes to *Melchisedec*, the great Representative of Christ, who is brought upon the stage like a man dropt out of the Clouds, only to shadow out Christ, as if he had neither Father nor Mother, Birth nor Death, *Heb.* 7. 2.

And that they were paid as a due to the Priesthood of Christ (sustained then in a figure by *Melchisedec*) the seventh Chapter to the *Hebrews* proves abundantly, and that *Levi* himself who took Tythes, here payed them, and that *Levi* had only a Commission (*pro tempore*) to be God's Rent-Gatherer and Receiver. They mistake that think the payment of the tenth part, was then first set on foot to defray the charges of that costly Worship, it was paid long before; *Abraham* is a full instance, † four hundred and thirty years before the Law (as the Apostle observes upon another occasion, *Gal.* 3. 17.)

† *Heb.* 7. 6. διδύκων καὶ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, He Tythed *Abraham*, which shews he had Authority to take Tythes, and seems to subject *Abraham*, to a necessity of paying of them. *Abraham* gave τὰ ἀρχαῖα, the very top and Chiefest part of all, *Heb.* 7. 4. Cain like a Churl gives the carion, the lean stuff, he brought of his fruits. *Abel* like a Prince, his first fruits, the best and fattest, *Gen.* 4. 4, 5. *Adam* began this Acknowledgement in the Sacrifices, with the Skins of which God clothed him, *Gen.* 3. 21.

17.) and I would know whether that were Will-worship in him, or what Law he hath observed, what rule he walked by therein? *Abraham* would not take a threed or a shoe latchet to himself, but took care God might have *his part*, and then return the rest (though now become his by conquest) to the former owner, but if he gave the Tythe only by courtesy, and not divine Authority, it proves not the thing in hand, the Excellency of *Melchisedec's* Priesthood above the *Levitical*: for surely that had Authority to take them, and so had *Melchisedec* payed the tenth part to him long before the Law, and *Levi* had only a Commandment to warrant his taking of the Tythes, *Heb. 7. 5.* The *jus decimandi* being long before vested in another Priest-hood, and only *pro tempore*, lent to that of *Levi*.

But this was only a tenth of the Spoils taken in War, may some say, what say ye then to that engagement of *Jacob*, *Gen. 28. 22.* *Of all that thou shalt give unto me I will surely give the tenth unto thee, Et hoc tam pro se quam pro posteris suis vovet*, he binds his posterity hereunto as well as himself, saith *Mercer in Loc.* † Methinks he speaks of it as a duty that he had been Catechised and trained up in the knowledge of. He had the direction of the Spirit for it, saith *Calvin*, and why not also the instruction of his Ancestors? For *Abraham* practised it before him: And yet this good man though he promised it so surely, was not so careful and punctual in his performance as he should have been, and his omission of it at his return, (when hastening to pacify his brother, he pluck away a good fleece from his estate, before the decimation thereof according

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† This duty was corrupted by *Cain*, reformed by *Abel*, practised by *Noah*, *Job*, &c. The Answer to Mr. *Selden's* History of Tythes, endeavours to prove that *Abraham* gave the tenth not of the Spoils only, but of all he had, however it is a good precedent for Soldiers: and for *Jacob*, he had some sufficient warrants, for his resolution. *Non quod suo arbitrio Deum Coluerit, nam directio spiritus vitæ legis scripta fuit.* Cat.

ing to his vow) seems to be the cause why the Angel contended so fore with him, that he put him to his tears and prayers, as *Hosea* tells us, *Chap.* 12. 4. And though he blest him, yet he sent him limping to his Grave, *Gen.* 35. 1. God calls him to perform his vow, and whether he paid it into the hands of *Heber*, or *Isaac* the head of the Family, *vel potius consecravit in usus sacres* set it apart for pious uses, 'tis all one to us, here's something belonging to the Law of Nature, or Moral Law for our instruction, and imitation, nor doth he engage upon condition, the particle *sed* rendered, *if*, *Ver.* 20. *until ver.* 15. *when*, *Numb.* 36. 4. *surely*, *Prov.* 3. 34. This takes away the great objection, if it were a duty according to the Moral Law, or Law of Nature, he would have engaged absolutely, and so you see he did, notwithstanding that in the Text Thus it was before the Law Ceremonial, and Christ approves it, *Matt.* 23. 23. and affirms that dedicating a part to charitable uses, sanctifies the whole, as the first Fruit sanctified the Lump, *Luk.* 11. 41, 42. and 12. 33. And finds no fault with the Pharisee for his Practice, *Luk.* 18. 12. for his giving up of a tenth part of all that he possessed to pious uses, but for his trusting in it; nor were the tenths all of them consumed by Christ's *Consumatum est*, but he teacheth us even to the end of the World, *to give unto God the things that are God's*, *Mark* 12. 17. and both we and all that we have are his, *1 Cor.* 29. 14. Though he is pleased to accept a small part in lieu of the whole.

* And plain it is, that there is such a thing as *Sacrilege* now in the Days of the Gospel, and I fear many more are guilty thereof than are aware of it; nay, well were it, if they were not most guilty, who seem most to abhor *Idols*; thou that *abhorrest Idols*, dost thou commit *Sacrilege*, *Rom.* 2. 22. *Concedimus Deo*, says *Magna Charta*, when it speaks of Separating the tenth part to holy uses, which part was called by the
Ancients,

* *Sacrum Deo non sine insigni in eum injuriâ ad profanos usus applicatur*, *Cal. instit.* l. 3. C. 7. §. 1.

Antients, † *Dei censet*, God's Rent, nor hath God forfeited his Right, because of man's abuse or superstition. I think also there must be some Rule of proportion for that laying by in store commanded by the Apostle, 1. Cor. 16. 2. *Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come, (According to Deut. 16. 10.) According as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in some due proportion.* Now if there be no rule for the quantity, a large heart may lay by too much and defraud his Relations or other occasions, a narrow heart will be sure to lay by too little, and to be guilty of Sacrilege by alienating that which is due to God, to whom *Jure Corona*, besides Homage and fealty, service and fidelity, we owe an Honorary Tribute, though no subsidiary Rent, for that he needeth not: But this he requireth, and little comfort shall they have who deny it to him.

§ This (though far too little for the point) may seem too much in this place, but if the Lord would set on the sense of this duty upon the hearts and Consciences of professors, and take them off from their subterfuges, and Cavils, and Evasions, how soon would there be a Sacred Bank, a stock raised, a Temple-treasury filled, to answer all religious occasions, to give a speedy relief to the necessities of Saints abroad, and at home, who starve many times while the Grass is growing, while the Alms are a gathering.

How

† *Ad successit in eorum decimarum*, Grotius in Loc. Origen who flourished Ann. Chr. 227. Mentions the Payment of the tenth part, recalled by *Urban*, which was as soon as any had a propriety of estate, till then believers in many places had a community of goods, because of the rage of persecution, but not in places where they were more free.

§ The poor, the persecuted, the widow, fatherless, and stranger, these are God's publicans, to gather this Rent, Revenue, Custom due unto him, his collectors, and porters to carry it into his thesaurary of Heaven, and there you will find it, *Luke 16. 9.*

How would this roll away our reproach of being *Solifidians*, and make the Gospel vie for fruitfulness in good works, with Popish Charity and blind devotion, *Tit. 3. 8.* let them who have believed in God, *be careful to maintain good works.* How would it cut off occasions from the flesh, which craves and calls for all, and consumes more upon some one lust, than all a man's graces ever cost him: How would it bring a blessing and prove a hedge about all the rest of the Estate, like *Hannab's* loaf which was lent to God, *1 Sam. 2. 20, 21.* He gave her back five for one, and so will he do by every one that ventures with him, will ye prove him *Mal. 3. 1.* do but try me, saith he in this one particular, but it is a snare for a man to devour that which is *sanctified*, * *Prov. 20. 25.* that which is and ought to be *separated* from common uses: men rob God, *Mal. 3. 8.* and put him to strain for his own, and he doth it many times to their sorrow, *Hof. 2. 8. 9.* *For she did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and multiplied her Silver and Gold which they prepared for Baal,* they wasted all upon their lusts. *Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof; and will recover my Wooll, and my flax, (given) to cover her nakedness.* *Sit tu decimam non dederis, tu an decimam revoceris,* (*Aug. de temp. Serm. 219.*) Because rich men will not give the tenth to God, God many times brings them to the Tenth

* An ancient Professor, after he had heard this point pressed in publick, told me it had been his Practice above 30 years, and that by the advice of the renowned *Dr. Usher.* And that he found much ease in giving, having always something by him which he looked on as none of his own, *Decimæ quæque veteres diis suis offerebant,* *Paulus Diacon. Abridgm. Fest.* All Nations by the instinct of nature, have practised it, or they learned it first from the people of God. They did *ritè dividere* though not *ritè offerre*, they admitted it as concluded on by an universal Parliament, though things are much varied by carrying far and long continuance, not answering to the Prototype and Original.

Tenth of what they had: God requires a seventh part of our time, because we have that meerly from his Bounty without our industry, but a tenth of our estate making a defalcation or allowance for our pains, and if he gives no increase he looks for nothing, now both as to the seventh part of our time, and the tenth part of our Estate, the Ceremonial and Levitical part being abolished, the moral use and equity remains to the World's end, all piety, justice, Gratitude requiring it, no Popish abuse ought to take away the use; and all Nations in all ages, practising this † duty, though in a wrong way, will rise up in Judgment and condemn us, if we who have the right way neglect it.

And who would repent his obedience hereunto when he comes to die, and to be torn away from all his outward enjoyments? then it is that mens consciences wring them, and make them sling away apace what they can grasp no longer. Oh, Then it is that their hearts die away with anguish and astonishment, to behold all the black *Items* of their expences, to think how they have served the Devil with their Estates and not God, to whom they are now a going to give an account of their stewardship when he will trust them no longer, they now feel the hook which they have swallowed, and would fain *disgorge* that which they are afraid to *digest* in Hell.

But alas, we have gotten a cheap Religion, and therefore like it because it saves our purses, though not our Souls; what praying heart feels not cause to bewail it, to go to God about it, and to fill his mouth with *Arguments*. If we hold our peace mens land will cry against them, and the furrows thereof *complain*, Job 31. 38. The rust of their Riches shall be a witness against them, *Jam.* 5. 3.

I have

† See Instances in Sir H. Sp. and Arguments from the New Testament in Dr. Carleton, Dr. Sclator, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Bagshaw, which proves the duty here pleaded for more strongly than the due they contended for: though if God fail of his due his Servants cannot want theirs.

I have only offered Hints to help on this blessed work of pleading and striving, and wrestling with God (with the arms of his own Spirit,) in Prayer, the decay and abatement whereof in our days is looked on as a sad symptom, and justly bewailed by the most spiritual professors. But alas, how few stir up themselves to take hold of God, *Isa.* 64. 7. Now it must needs be granted, that the spirit of Adoption is the best Logician, the only One, both for *Invention* and *Judgment*; it was he that taught *Aristotle* and others to reason with men, as well as *Job* and *Jeremy* and the rest of the Saints, to reason out the case with God.

When he hath formed the Propositions according to his own Canons and principles of truth laid down in the Scriptures; and made the Assumption according to his office, which is to bear witness, 1 *John* 5. 6. and so hath made application of the proposition to the person, to the poor solicitous soul. He will thence clearly and strongly infer the Conclusion.

Yea, All His Arguments are highly Satisfactory, his Demonstration irrefragable, his Dilemmas unavoidable; So that he convinces of righteousness as well as of sin, and subdues the Soul to the obedience of faith, it cannot turn from him; and in like manner doth he raise and refresh it when it is weary? If we admit that distinction of a Mediation and Reconciliation, and of intercession, as that belongs to Christ, so this to the Spirit, not exclusively as to Christ but as to Angels and Saints departed, *Rom.* 8. 26. *The spirit itself maketh intercession for us.*

And without breach of Charity I dare be bold to say, he hath none of that spirit within him, who can find no help by the conscientious and constant use of this way of pleading, if it be not to suppose an impossibility that any can conscientiously use it without him; Nay, I dare say these considerations here hinted cannot miss if rightly used: Only I would advise every one that would do any good on't, to pick out and select something out of every Sermon they hear, to be repeated upon the knees in secret, which posture I judge

judge best, both for repeating and studying any thing of this nature.

And let me add, If God will not hear thee, and answer thee upon these terms ; If he do not put strength into thee, if he be not content that faith should overcome, then be thou bold to say, that all the Ministers of his holy Gospel are sadly mistaken in it and him, *Heb. 10. 35. Cast not away therefore, this confidence, this privilege of speaking freely and pleading with your God, which hath great recompence of reward.* He who so graciously answers pious ejaculations, *Nehem. 2. 4.* will undoubtedly answer the powerful *Expostulations* of Faith and *Pleadings* of his spirit : Forget not therefore how he calls his people to leave off their reasonings with Satan, with flesh and blood, and with their own evil hearts, and to come and reason out the matter with him, and what he promiseth shall ensue thereon, *Isa. 1. 18. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll.* And such are many of our sins, sins of a deep dye, of a double tincture, relapses are so.

But for those who live not within the lines of this *Communication*, who come not within any of the *qualifications* here mentioned, who cannot own any of these Arguments, (if it be possible any such should have the leisure and patience to read them) The Lord have mercy upon them, they cannot *plead* and will be *pressed* to death, for want of it.

Thus have I brought you to peep through the key-hole, through the hole of the door into the Tower of *David*, builded for an Armoury, wherein there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men ; and if you have felt your beloved, putting in his hand by the hole of the door and touching your hearts, your Bowels have been moved for him, and will be more and more ; you'll not be at rest till you have been arguing out the matter with him in secret daily ; And so the pouring in a dishful of water may help to set the Pump a going, and cause a pouring out of your hearts to some purpose, this poor thing may serve to do the work of a Gibeonite,

Gibeonite, help to hew wood and draw water for the Tabernacle and the Altar, it may help you with those Israelites that *lamented after the Lord*, to draw water and to pour it out before the Lord, 1 Sam. 7. 2.

And let me say assuredly that exercise will infinitely surpass in sweetness all sports and pastimes, all the treasures and glories of this world, all the delights of the sons of men, for 'tis the delight of the Sons of God; 'tis Heaven on Earth, Heaven on this side Heaven, and will undoubtedly convey you at last into the Heaven of Heavens, there to be extasied with joy and glory for evermore.

F I N I S.

Spiritual Pleadings:
BEING, AN
IMITATION
AND
SUPPLEMENT
OF

Mr. *Thomas Harrison's* Book,
INTITULED,
TOPICA SACRA, &c.

By Mr. JOHN HUNTER Minister of the
Gospel at *Ayre*.

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Spiritual Pleadings.

AS Prayer is the native breathing of a spiritual Soul, without which it can no more live (and when it is well at itself it thinks so) than we can subsist without the common Air, so it is one of the principal helps for maintaining Liveliness in Religion, seeing that the freedom of that breathing often times fans up a spark of life, which is so small that its hardly perceivable, unto a flame; and as it is so necessary and useful to a Soul that has any acquaintance with God, so it may be said to be more extensive in its usefulness than most of the Duties, as *Faith* is more than the rest of the *Graces*; and it is a kind of supplement for many of the defects of both: For when we cannot act Love, Repentance and Consecration of ourselves to God, directly and in themselves, with any becoming distinctness and vigour, we may act them prayer-wise, requesting that we may be brought up to them, and intermixing humble protestations against our being so far short of what we ought to be, which shall be taken as some small degrees of attaining unto that which we earnestly would have.

The Scripture tells us of a *Spirit of grace and supplications*, Zech. xii. 10. to be poured out on the Church in good days, which I think imports not only liberal furnishing of matter, but also frame for, and Art in wrestling with God: This is a day wherein these things are as much wanting as they have been in most ages, and since, alas! we are not so happy, as to have our showers from Heaven, which was the manner of watering the land of *Israel*, Deut. xi. 10, 11. we must do what we can to water our ground with the foot, as the *Egyptians* were said to do in another sense, by exciting and exerting all our gifts and graces in this noble and refreshing

refreshing exercise ; not that any Art can prevail on God without the assistance of his own spirit, but that he who pleases to reward the skill and pains of the frugal husbandman, in doing his best upon his soil, with seasonable showers and warmth for making his seed to grow, will countenance humble endeavours in things of far greater concernment.

It is a shame that we are not often at more pains with ourselves, both before our Prayers to melt our Souls into a tenderness of affection, or at least to rouse them into an earnestness, and also in them, that we who stand like statues, and whose words freeze upon our lips, may speak with a frame becoming God and everlasting interests, and it must be confessed, a great part of our deadness in our performance is owing to the stretching and dividing of our thoughts between what we are to say, (which is to seek) and the manner in which we would express it, which impairs the force of our Spirit, as by division every thing grows less, whereas to have it well considered what we should say in relation to our case, ere we come before God, might spare us much of the labour of seeking out our Matter, and our Arguments whereby we are to urge it, and reserve most of our strength for being laid out upon the seriousness of our Addresses.

I am not for being limited to things premeditated, and as little for refusing helps, and indeed we not only see, but feel the truth of this, that our natural scarcity of things that are heavenly, when we present ourselves before God pleads that we should value and gather them, especially since the Scripture is a store-house so wonderfully suited to wants of this kind, by Commands, Promises and Experiences : And yet the design of this little Book is not so much to furnish us with Matter, as a way of managing it, after the manner of pleading, so as our matter may be the more adapted both to give flame to our affections, and maintain it in them.

The Occasion of my venturing out upon this Work, was a sight I got of a little Book, that's too little known for the excellency of it, called *Harrison's Pleadings with God,*

God, with which I was so much taken, that as I could not but desire always to carry such a Box of perfumes about with me, so I was sorry it was no larger, and therefore that I might have something at hand, that might answer many more Cases than what are in it often occurring, I set myself with the help of my dearest acquaintance in our sweetest and most solitary hours for conversing about eternal Things, to carry on a little *Work* of this kind, in Imitation of that savoury Writer: Not as if I thought I could ever come up to or near him, for I really take him to be as inimitable, as almost any Writer upon Religion ever I read, but that I resolved to entertain my own Spirit, with something that should savour of him, however far short of my Exemplar I should fall.

I look upon his Contrivance as fine, his Invention rich, his Fancy heated, but with Coals from the Altar, his Eloquence Sublime and Spiritual, his Arguments surprizing, and his manner of urging them full of all that is soft and humble, the agreeable qualities of a Suppliant; and yet intermixed with the allowed confidence of a Man that Prays not only from the sense of need, but faith of Mercy. All the Objection that seems to lie against his Book, if it may be called an Objection, is that it can never go well away without a liveliness of frame, and it is so formed out of, and attuned unto this, that it will hardly agree to the dispositions that are Ordinary, and therefore it shall be of little use. But I judge it is answered when we say, that as it requires a spirituality of Frame, so it wonderfully contributes to the procuring of it; and indeed it must Insensibly carry a Soul up unto it, (as an Instrument) if it shall have but so much seriousness, as can serve to take on better impressions.

*Men gratefully have built a Monument,
To him, whose lucky Wisdom did invent,
An easier way to manage Trade,
Or whose adventurous Soul has made
The passage to its distant shore,
Through all the Seas impervious before,*

*Both known and short; I'll tell a Name
 Which may with greater reason claim;
 To be inscrib'd within the breast,
 Of all that are the Wise, of all that are the Best.
 Its Harrison, which when I hear,
 Strikes with so grateful sound mine ear,
 I find my Soul ev'n charm'd away
 Into that Art, he did so wond'rously display,
 It's He who has instructed us to Sail,
 To Heaven, with a more auspicious gale,
 Or to hang out our flaging Sails and Watch,
 Heaven's friendly wind, which waiting Souls may catch,
 Job's earnest wish O might we deal,
 With God, as one when he'd prevail,
 Doth with his Neighbour, is allow'd,
 For Harrison did so, and how we may bath show'd
 By his rare art of Pleading he hath taught,
 The Cottager to be a Patriot,
 Who cannot stand and plead his Country's cause
 In that great meeting whence we have our Laws,
 May plead for it with God upon his knees,
 And vie with the Great Duke in all his Victories.
 Yea while he doth request he can command,
 For God himself can ne'er withstand
 Reasons himself hath made, and faith inspires,
 They give Omnipotence to Saints desires.*

Job ix. 32. *For he is not a Man that I should answer him, or that we should come together in Judgment.*

Job xvi. 21. *O that one might plead for a Man with God, as a Man pleadeth for his Neighbour!*

Job xxiii. 6, 7. *Will he plead against me with his great power, No, but he would put strength in me. There the Righteous might dispute with him. So should I be delivered for ever from my Judge.*

The great God we have to do with, may be considered either under the awful aspect of the absolute Lord of the World, as having both a Dominion of propriety over all the Creation, and a Dominion of Sovereignty over all the Rational Beings, Angels and Men. And there cannot be a more humbling thought than that
 which

which we have of him as King of Nations: For in this his Wisdom, Justice, Power, Majesty, and Government offer to our view, and *Jeremy* Argues, the most native Result of this must be the profoundest reverence; Chapter x. 7. ver. *Who would not fear thee O King of Nations? for unto thee doth it appertain.* But we are allowed to entertain more sweet and engaging thoughts of God, as one who condescends from his absolute Greatness to act as a friend with us, So as he will both use strange familiarity with the works of his own hands, and allow them to use it with him.

In these places of Scripture I have chosen for entertaining some savory Meditations upon *Pleading with God*, *Job* takes him up both ways; in the first of them he acknowledges none can plead any right against God, as one might do against another, for all our Rights are swallowed up in his, and founded upon Sovereign pleasure, there is no common Law to rid Marches between his right and ours, and indeed these are never to be considered as opposite, the one being but a Dependance on the other, and there is not an indifferent person, to whom we can bring our Causes; for our party is our judge, and tho' we should be so foolish, as to debate with God, we'll be forced to remember we are to stand or fall eternally by his Sentence. *For he is not a Man as I am, that I should answer him, neither is there any days-man between us, that might lay his Hands on both.* Job ix. 32. 33. In the Sense of this he inclines to have things managed by a Plea of Mercy, rather than of Justice, only he passionately wishes a Man were allowed to use that freedom in pleading for Mercy at the hands of God, that one might have when he tenderly feels his Neighbour's troubles, and pleads with his acquaintance for him, in that expression, *O that a Man might plead with God, as one doeth for his Neighbour*, Job xvi. 21. Where he seems to speak more doubtfully of the believer's Privileges, access, and boldness at the Throne of Grace; but in the 23^d. Chapter, he avers there is a *Seat*, which he would gladly come to, at which the Righteous may dispute with him and he would not plead against them, but

but rather secretly supply them with Arguments, and strength to urge them before him, and as it were against him. The word in the Original which we have translated *Dispute with him* is the same that we have for the word *Plead* in this 23^d. Chapter, and also in the 16. and 21. and imports an Arguing or advancing Reasons for what we say, to show our adversary that we are in the right, and bring him over unto our side; yea, it signifies an advancing Pleas of Law and Justice in some Sort for what we seek: this is the allowance of a set of Men, and we shall shortly consider the import of it, the assistance they have for improving it, in these words, *No, but he would put strength in me*, and the qualifications of them to whom they belong, in that word *the Righteous*. For the first of which, it will be proper that it be cleared what is the manner of his Peoples managing their *pleadings with God*.

First, They found upon a Title to Mercy formed out of the Graciousness of the Nature of God, in such Reasonings as these; *Psal. lxxxvi. 15. But thou art good and Gracious, slow to Anger and full of Compassion, Psal. xxxvi. 7. How excellent is thy loving kindness! &c.*

Secondly, But because Faith is more particular and bold upon experience, therefore they love to plead, as it is his disposition, so it has been his use and wont to shew mercy, *art not thou it which brake Rahab in pieces, which wounded the head of the Dragon, Art not thou it which dried the waters of the Red-Sea? awake as in the antient days, O arm of the Lord; Isa. li. 9, 10.*

Thirdly, Some time they dare plead the incongruity of what is deprecated, and the Lord seems to design: when he threatned to make an end of *Israel*, *Moses* disputes it was not fit, for that it would occasion a reflection among the Heathens, *Numb. xiv. 13, 14. Then the Egyptians shall bear of it, and the Nations which heard the fame of thee, If thou kill them all as one Man, will say, because the Lord was not able to bring them to the Land he swore unto them, therefore he slew them.*

Fourthly, They plead the suitableness of what is requested, as it's congruous to his Glory, *what will thou do for thy great Name? Josh. vii. 9. and to his way*

of doing in all other things, *Lord thou gives rain, and makes the Heaven give showers, therefore we'll wait on thee for all these things*, Jer. xiv. 22.

Fifthly, He will allow us to make our Arguments out of need, and piece up the strength of them by such expressions as these, *The Poor commits his Cause to thee*, Psal. x. 14, *and the needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever*, Psal. ix. 18. *In thee the Fatherless findeth Mercy*, Hosea xiv. 3.

Sixthly, Sometimes we draw our Plea from his promises, whereby he is pleased, as it were to become Debtor to his Creature, *Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever is a thirst may come and take of the water of Life freely*. Matth. xi. 28. *Come to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden*. Upon which I mind to have heard a Man going to Execution argued in a most assured and lively manner, thus; O Lord, Thou bade the Weary *Come to thee*, and promised *Rest* in the face of this Sun, and all the witnessses of my sad case this day, I dare aver I am the heavy loaden and weary Soul, I take Instruments on it, that I must have rest upon thine own terms.

We are not here to conceive, that our Arguings can give God any new thought of things, or dispose him to any Inclinations, which he had not eternally to do good to Man, but they are useful for forming our own spirits unto a tenderness and liveliness, necessary for making Prayer, and receiving the effects of it, for we no more draw him by our reasonings, than the raw Sailor makes the shoar move toward himself, tho' he is ready to think he does, but we do well if we draw ourselves up to him by such arts, as things of a great weight are lifted by Engines of curious contrivance; for indeed we have as much reason to wrestle with ourselves as with him, and we must many ways veer about to get out to a roomthie Sea, or catch a favourable Gale, and it will cost us labour to know how to place our sails, I mean arguings with God, so as they may best receive the favourable influences of Heaven, and oft-times we must shift the Sails, when the first choice will not do.

Seventhly, The soul turns even arguments of *Discouragement* so happily about, as they serve to give a noble confidence, and boldness unto Faith: If it be urged, Justice must be satisfied, and the Law honoured, the answer is made, therefore I should be pardoned; for our Lord Jesus Christ his sufferings are a more noble satisfaction than what I am capable to make, and God will get more honour by my being discharg'd through such a Cautioner, than my eternal chains could yield; And if it be insisted upon, sins are great, and it seems not reasonable, that such should be forgiven, the soul is able to strengthen its own applications to mercy thus, O it is most reasonable, that *where sin hath abounded Grace should superabound*. Rom. v. 20. *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is very great*, Psal. xxv. 11. is good reasoning with him, who makes mercy illustrious upon the most desperate like instances of Guilt, and if it should be said, it is a kind of presumption to plead so, *For it is not fit to take the childrens bread and give it to the dogs*; the Soul can say, true Lord! but yet *the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the Childrens table*. Mark. vii. 28.

Eighthly, Where the Spiritual dexterity of disputing goes not this length, there is an Answering of Objections: As when it's told the supplicant, *God hears not sinners*: The believer can say, *impenitent Sinners*; who allow themselves in any known iniquity, and he hopes, however humble he is, that he is not of that number: and to that objection, *He that is born of God sinneth not*; he can reply, that is, sinneth not with a complacency in his departure from God.

It's easy to account for all this freedom and skill the Believer hath at the Throne of Grace, if we consider there is an indeficient secret supply of strength secured to him, God will not plead against him with his great Power; no, but he will put strength in him, if he plead against him, it's but as a Father Reasons with his Child, for putting him to the Exercise of any capacity he hath, and that he may teach him to maintain his Cause, and have the pleasure of hearing his little Answers, which he either furnishes altogether, or makes out for him;

it is not his manner to crush the Prisoners of the Earth, under his feet, to subvert a Man in his cause, or to turn aside the right of a Man before the face of the Most High, the Lord approveth not. Lam. iii. 35, 36, 37. If he should plead against us with his great Wisdom, all our Reason should fail under the force of his Convictions, if he should plead against us with his great Justice, our Courage would sink, so as we could not say one Word; and if he should plead against us with his Power, we should cease to be, or plead any thing at all; but Blessed be his Name, he takes another way, and it's owing to this secret supply of Strength, that we have it upon Record, to Jacob's never dying Honour, *Hosea 12. 3, 4. That by his strength he had Power with God, yea he had Power over the Angel, and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him,* a victory by all the softness of submission and request, as it were, God in Jacob was more powerful than God without him: It's in this the Spirit, the Force, the art of Prayer or wrestling lies, and the Holy Ghost, the great Advocate of Man within him assists and manages the Soul in this Exercise, especially in two Respects.

First, He furnishes Matter, We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps our Infirmities. Rom. 8. 26. O what noble fields of Meditation, and fuel of affections does he lead them into, who by reason of darkness cannot so much as utter Words before God.

Secondly, He gives liveliness whereby they can urge humble requests, both a liveliness of Faith, to assure the confidence, and hope of success, and Love to pursue the Blessings that Faith directs unto, and this may be imported in that, He helps us with groans and sighs that cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26.

This is the spirit which breathes the breath of Life into the Souls of all the Godly, and this natively acts itself in breathing after him who is its Original, by the egressions of Faith and Prayer, and as he is compared in his Breathings to the blowings of the Wind, the comparison may well hold in this, that as the Wind oft-times rises surprisingly in a dead calm; so he is

pleased seasonably to come in upon the Soul, when under the most discouraging and sinking fits of heartlessness toward the things of Heaven; sometimes with his more piercing and rousing blasts of *North Wind*; convictions and terrors, and at other times, with the more gentle Gale of a *South Wind*, Cant. 4. 16. sense of Love, hope of Heaven, and joys in Himself, and this like a Wind coming over a warm Country, kindly thaws the Soul into such a softness, that all its faculties melt into the Divine Will, and the Man acts strangely complacential Emotions toward God, and lively embraces, and sprightly Converses with him, as the *Amorous flower* is said to do with the Sun, in his return with his benign and cherishing Beams, and he hath such a relish of the sweetness of this case, that he falls down, and worships the author of his often restored Life; as ever the *Persian* adored the Sun of Nature, for his stated returns, and renewing the face of the decayed Earth. I think I hear one who holds himself obliged for Light and Life, unto the Spirit of God, with all the elevation of Soul he can attain unto, expressing his Adorations thus.

O last of the adored Three,
 Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
 By an inexplicable Mystery;
 The sweetness of them both hath flowed
 Upon our Souls, by breathings thou allow'd,
 Which can restore us, when we are undone.
 The Father is Love's everlasting Spring,
 The Son Love's precious River, which did bring
 The great designed Bliss in crimson stream
 Down to the Sons of Adam, but we swam
Spirit In joys of the bless'd Sport, as in the Sea,
 To which that Spring and River always run,
 Their Love our great concernment hath begun,
 We owe its consummation unto thee.

When we like Wind-bound Seamen lye,
 Or tug at Oars of unassisted pains,
 Without Success, we only try
 Our weakness by the rattling of our Chains;

But

But if thou breathe, the Fetters all are loos'd,
 The Chains dissolve, and this our Mouths confess
 By free requests which hitherto were clos'd,
 And praise as fast as Prayers they express:
 So Birds relieved from the Gin,
 Both mount and sing the happy State they're in.

Blest guide of wand'ring Souls, who made
 Each argument of all the Scripture's Store,
 And shows us to it, and when thus we're led,
 Thou makes it sweet, its infinitely more.
 What can the heap of fuel do,
 If there be nothing to strike up the Fire,
 The best of Arguments are useless too,
 If Heavenly breathings don't inspire
 Our Souls with kindly heat, we'd soon perceive
 Prayers would sink us, when they should relieve.

Thou as the Spirit of Life does move
 Through all the veins of each Believer's Heart,
 Yea that great Body of the Church above,
 And that below is quickned by thy Love;
 By thee they both perform their part
 In Prayers and praises, and it's echoed loud,
 Thanks to the Son who gave us Royal Blood,
 By taking ours, and thanks unto his Spirit,
 By whom the life of God was added unto it.

Thy blowings coming o'er the Field
 Of Scripture Promises can make them yeild
 Their sweet perfumes ev'n as the Winds
 That from some warmer Regions rise,
 Wherein the Soul is stor'd with all the kin
 Of odoriferous Herbs, sometime surprise
 The passing Sailor, with so great a Sweet,
 That all the Charms of Smell do seem to meet.

And now, I shall only say something about the
 Qualification of the Man who is allowed to dispute with
 God: He must be Righteous, that is, he must have

both the Righteousness of *Justification*, by Believing, and that of *Sanctification*, by Holiness of Heart and Life: *God heareth not Sinners*; it's true the worst of Men are commanded to make Prayer, but they are not allowed the Familiarity that a Man of God's Acquaintance hath, who may go with all that ails him unto God, and tell him what the World may not know, and he takes no trouble of even importunity itself, and he makes out the Requests of his People, which are but imperfect and broken Expressions in themselves: But blessed be his Name, he hath not excluded even from arguing with him all but these, for we may argue with him as Men, when we cannot argue with him as Saints, and plead General, when we have no title to special Promises, drawing our Reasonings from the Actings or the necessities of Nature, which is also his own in some respect, when we cannot from the attainment of Grace.

Some of the *Cases* I have offered Arguments upon are fitted unto the one sort, and some to the other.

C A S E I. *Need of Mercy.*

AND *First*, if thou would go and seek Mercy in the General, and indeed this must be one main plea for answer to all thy particular *Cases*, thou may take Words in thy Mouth, and urge hard for it, by such *Arguments* as these,

First, Lord thou hast implanted Mercy into the nature of Man, and we justly count him unnatural who hath it not, and this mercy of Man extends not only to the rational Creature like himself, but even the unreasonable, we are melted into Compassion by the sight of extream Misery on the Beast that perishes, shall it not be found with thee who art so infinitely *perfect*, and toward a Creature, thou hast given such a vast Soul unto that its capable of living in exquisite Pleasure or Torments, as long as thou hast a Being, can thou be behind with the Works of thine Hands, in so noble a quality as this is, which sets off every Nature.

Secondly,

Secondly, Thou hast been pleased to say very great things of Mercy, as taking a pleasure in commending it, it's thy pleasure, thou art rich in Mercy: it's the attribute thou hast plac'd next thy Being in the Proclamation of thy Name, *The Lord the Lord God merciful and gracious, long Suffering, and abundant in Goodness, &c.* Exod. 34. 6, 7. Thou hast said it reaches to the Heavens, is in the Heavens, and above them; Psal. 57. 10. 36. 5. 108. 4. what mean all these words? how becoming unto them is it that thou should show it to many Creatures, yea to all that call upon thee, yea that thou should seek out occasions for so glorious a display, that thou may signalize it by them, how shall we keep up the Faith of what is said, or the Honour we owe that great Attribute without some experience of the truth of these things.

Thirdly, Thou hast made use of all the sweet Words that can induce a Sinner to have good Thoughts of thee, upon this head, *The Lord is good and gracious, slow to Anger, and full of Compassion, ready to forgive, easy to be intreated, who will repent him of the Evil, and turn again*; Jona. 4. 2. upon the Faith of these the Sons of Men come unto thee, and we among the rest desire to come, Lord we plead *Thou wilt not cut off the expectation of the Poor, nor suffer the Hope of the Needy to fail*, Psal. 9. 18. for it's all founded upon the good report thou hast made to go of thyself; wilt thou send us away empty, after we are come out upon it? what would this do but tempt us to think thou art like the Waters that fail, and thou hast deceived us and we were deceived, Jer. 15. 18. 20. 7.

Fourthly, Hast thou not said, *As the Heaven is higher than the Earth, so are thy Ways higher than ours, and thy Thoughts than our Thoughts*, Isa. 55. 9. to hold out to us, that thou showest Mercy where Man would reckon it presumption to expect or seek it.

Fifthly, Thou knows, without my looking on thee as Merciful to my experience, thy Attributes can never have a sweet aspect to me, thy Wisdom would appear like Cunning to take advantage of me, Power like Tyranny, Holiness like irreconcilable Enmity, Justice like

Rigour and Severity, *Faithfulness* like peremptoriness; but a sense of Mercy would put a glorious lustre on them all: Power and Mercy join'd together render thee in the fight and acknowledgment of thy Creatures wondrously fit to be the Governor of Mankind. *I have heard Power belongs to thee, also Mercy, thou wilt give to every one according to his Works,* Psal. 62. 11. 12.

C A S E II. *Want of Light in things of God.*

AD because *Light* is the first great Mercy God bestows upon a Soul, he designs everlasting kindness for, as it was the first particular piece of his Workmanship in Nature, *God said let there be Light and there was Light,* Gen. 1. 3. go and plead earnestly with him, that he would give thee this fundamental Blessing of Spiritual Illumination, without which all his Mysteries are lost to thee, and upon this Head thou mayest say,

First, I know the natural *Light* of the most exalted human Reason, and the artificial *Light* of the most exquisite Learning, can never suffice for right conceiving of the things of God, as no Man ever yet saw the Sun but by its own light, neither can any perceive thee but by thine: thy Spirit is the great Interpreter of thy Word, and Providences, who can satisfyingly explain them, and I desire to be content with no less than Heaven's Demonstrations for things of Heaven, and to know and believe God's matters upon his own Testimony, which none is able to resist, *O let me in thy Light see Light,* Psal. 36. 9.

Secondly, If the poor blind Man to whom thou hast denied the comfort of the natural *Light*, urges so hard, we should pity him who never saw the Light of Day, and if this has so strong an Argument to work on our Compassions, allow me to plead with thee, pity one who never saw the Light of the *Sun of Righteousness*, that more precious and glorious Sight, and since we give the greatest Alms to the Blind and Lame, because their visible Misery assists and enforces all their Requests, may not I expect thou wilt give liberally, if
thou

thou should allow me only one Request, and should ask what wilt thou that I should do to thee? this should be it, *Lord that I may receive my Sight*, Mat. 20. 33.

Thirdly, I believe there must be a great distinction between the Knowledge that the natural and the spiritual Man has of thee, for I see he that knows many of the things of God, and can talk strangely of them, yet seems not to be perswaded of all he says, otherwise he could not but make a better choice than of this poor World for *his all*, but thine own find *the treasure hid in the field*, and for joy thereof go, *and sell all they have, and buy it*, Math. 13. 45. this is not only a knowledge but a believing, so as to say, now we are sure that these things are so, and we venture our Everlasting all upon the Revelation, O make us know the great difference which lyes in this, between being taught of Men and being *taught of God*, John 6. 45.

Fourthly, If it be said of Nature's *Light*, truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun, Eccl. 11. 7. how much sweeter would it be to behold thee, the original and primigenial Light, and to have a Light from thee, shining upon all other Things with us!

Fifthly, Thou knows how much such a Light as this would establish my Heart, and assure my way, in the Duties of Religion, and that according as this grows or decays, rises or falls, so does my seriousness and liveliness in everlasting Concerns, when thy Light strikes vigorously on the Spiritual sense, I'll go to Work *vivaciously*, but when that withdraws, my Spirits sink as in the darkness and horrors of the Night.

Sixthly, O how becoming and suitable is it unto thee to give Light to one who sits in Darkness, thou art the *Light of Israel, the Father of Lights*, from whom the best of Gifts descend, thine it is to *instruct with a strong Hand, who teaches like thee?* thou teaches to profit, and has thy Chair in Heaven, and instructs more in one Moment, than all the Doctors in the World in Years or Ages.

Seventhly, Thou called unto thyself two blind Men who sat by the way-side, and cried that *Jesus the Son of*

David would have Mercy upon them, Math. 20. 30. and restored their Sight, therein giving us, among many others, a special ground of Hope, that thou would do some such thing for us; wilt thou not pity us, who requests a more valuable favour than they who sought Eyes that they might see the light of the Sun of Nature? we seek Illumination, that we may be capable to do thy Work; thou who answers desires for Natural things, be pleas'd to answer requests for things spiritual.

C A S E III. *Need of Forgiveness.*

BUT since *Pardon of Sin* is that precious Channel by which he conveys so many Mercies to the Creature, thou mayst go, and plead for it by such Arguments as these.

First, Lord I have heard Thou art a God ready to pardon, slow to anger, of great Kindness, Neh. 9. 17. and easy to be entreated, which gives me ground to think thou wilt bestow this favour upon all that humbly seek it, and that thou art even waiting for People's coming to make request for it, that thou mayst have occasion to show thy gracious disposition, I am among those that seek it this day, O forgive first the unworthiness of my Prayer; and then the Guilt I plead against.

Secondly, I know thou loves to make discoveries of thy Power, and thy Power cannot but be great, if thou shouldst pardon such Sins as mine, which when Conscience does its Office with me, I am tempted to say are greater than can well be forgiven; it's called a kind of Power among Men to be deny'd unto Revenge, O what Omnipotency must it be that can bear with my Provocations, so as to give me a Reprieve, but how astonishing must it be, that can give a full Remission! Thou art Lord of thy Fury, and Master of thyself, otherwise I could not expect it, therefore I beseech thee, let the Power of my Lord be great according as thou said. The Lord God merciful and gracious, long Suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth, pardoning Iniquity and Transgressions, Num. 14. 17, 18, 19. and give me evidence of it by pardoning mine.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I know thou would be feared, and this is due unto thee from all thy Creatures, but thou can never be feared as thou shouldst without bestowing this Mercy, *There is forgiveness with thee that thou may'st be feared*, Psal. 130. 4. without it I may fear thee, as Devils and damned Persons do, with desperation and horror, breeding perpetual aversion; but this is a Fear not good enough for a God, who is so much to be loved, I would gladly have a better for thy sake, a Fear mixed and sweetened with Love, Humility, Tenderness and Submission.

Fourthly, I believe that thou hast placed that Word in thy Name, when thou proclaim'd it to *Moses, pardoning Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, of design to shew us that thou forgives all kinds of Sin, and as my Transgressions are of many kinds, so some of them are of the worst.

Fifthly, Thou hast bidden us forgive our Neighbour, *Tho' he offend against us seventy times seven*, Math. 18. 22. may I not expect thy forgiveness shall be oftner than that of Man, as thou art greater than he, as there is no comparison betwixt thee and him in Nature, so let there be none in thy Graciousness, and multiplications of *Pardon*. Thou saidst thou wouldst not go into the City to destroy it, *because thou art God and not Man*, Hos. 11. 9. O how becoming is it unto thy being God, that the instances of Pardon should be innumerable, since thou hast commanded us to extend ours so far?

Sixthly, If thou would forgive mine Iniquity, it would cure me of all my uneasiness, it should be health to my Bones, and I should not feel my Sores, *the Inhabitant shall not say he is sick*, when his Iniquity is pardoned, Isa. 33. 24.

C A S E IV. *Pleadings for Faith in the Son of God.*

BUT thou art (and cannot but be) sensible, that there is something essentially necessary to thy obtaining so great a Mercy as *Forgiveness*, even upon thy part, for though the Covenant of Grace may be called *Absolute*, and rather a *Promise*, than a *Covenant*, for that

that all necessary to Life and Godliness must be of free Grace, yet some things must be done in order to make thee capable of many of its Blessings, and *Faith* is a main one of these, upon the consideration of which thou art complaining, thou cannot attain that superlative esteem of our Lord Jesus Christ, which would oblige thee to venture thine everlasting *all* upon his precious offer in the Gospel; upon this head thou mayest go and plead in such a manner.

First, Lord I have heard *That no Man can come unto Christ, except the Father which sent him draw him*, John, 6. 44. and it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who sheweth mercy, Rom. 9. 16. and all that are saved are saved through Grace, by Faith, and that not of themselves, it is the Gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. Therefore I come to seek it at thy hands, Never man had it another way, I know and I own my nature is as backward as any can be.

Secondly, I know the *Covenant* thou hast made with Man for Salvation is wellordered in all things, 2 Sam. 23. 5. and this is one of its pieces of precious Order, that thou not only provides a Great Reward for him who enters into it, but also hast secured the very condition of it, and for our Encouragement called it the *Covenant of promise*, Eph. 2. 12. so that all must be of thee.

Thirdly, If thou would be pleased to enable me to Believe I should do Honour to all thine Attributes, I have thrown so much dishonour upon; and especially, I should glorify thy Wisdom in admiring the precious and Glorious Contrivance of Salvation, by such a Redeemer as thine own Son; I should Celebrate the praises of thy Mercy, that set Wisdom on search for so great a thing, I should justify the Procedures of Justice, in taking satisfaction of such a Cautioner, when the Guilty sinner could not give it in such perfection, and should commend the Holiness of God, for that he would not bestow life on the fallen Creature, but in this way so becoming the Greatness and the Glory of his Nature.

Fourthly, O! what a sad matter is it, that all my Duties of Religion should be at best nothing else but
Splendid

Splendid Sins, specious Formalities, and they can be no other without *Faith*, without which *it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. I desire to lament it, that all the Acts of my Devotion in this Case are but the performances of an enemy, little better than Acts of Hostility.

Fifthly, What an Heart must it be, that cannot bless God with the utmost Liveliness, for that ever he pleased to send our Lord into the World, and that cannot give thanks to that Redeemer, for his being willing to come, and stand betwixt us and endless wrath. Can I but think it a *faithful saying* and therefore be most thoroughly persuaded of it, *and worthy of all acceptance*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. and therefore with the most endeared affections, and most cordial embracements I am capable of, laying hold upon such a Condescension as this is. O! may I be persuaded that *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him, because he ever lives to make Intercession*, Heb. 7. 25. to the uttermost of all our Hopes, of all our Desires, of all our Guilt, of all our Capacity, and to the uttermost of Eternity: and by this be persuaded unto him, and say, with all my Heart I am well pleased with the device of Salvation through him, and desire to be happy through none other, counting nothing so desirable as *to be found in him not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law; but the Righteousness which is of God by Faith: and may I count all things but loss and Dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and that I may win him*, Philip. 3. 9. 8. Lord I would gladly believe, *help thou rebellious unbelief*, Mar. 9. 24. *and bring into Captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 3.

C A S E V. *For the Reviving and Relieving Influences of the Holy Ghost.*

BUT because it is necessary that thou should serve God with a perfect Heart and willing mind, without which the Mercy of Pardon would be a very incomplete Happiness, and also very tasteless to a renewed Soul; plead with God for the perpetual breathings of his Spirit, to hold thy Heart always in Warmness
and

and Softness, and to make his Work to go well away with thee.

First, O Lord! thou knowest how useless it is for me to tug at the Oars of unassisted endeavours, and what a great measure of hopeless pains is in this poor exercise; the Seamen can never think to make a Voyage without the favourable Gale, which he watches for, nay not so much as to get his Vessel brought to motion without it, and I can do no more in Grace, than he does in Nature.

Secondly, Thou hast not only appointed the Sea, to be the Element whereby a perpetual Trade should be kept up, but has ordered it so in Nature, that the Winds shall often blow from different Corners of the World, to answer the necessities and Expectations of Traders and Passengers; may not I plead that thou who hast appointed Ordinances and other means also, whereby we may get up to Heaven, would be pleased to do as much in Grace, as thou dost in Nature, add the Propitious gale of thy Spirit's breathings.

Thirdly, We have it put out of question and debate, what has been thy compassion to the Sons of Men, in that thou sent *Our Lord Jesus Christ into the World to save them*, Jo. 3. 16. and it is as much beyond all doubt, how great his kindness towards us was, in that he was *pleased to give his Life a Ransom for many*, Matt. 20. 28. O let us have an Evidence of the Compassions of the Spirit of God also, that we may give our praises to all the three Persons of the inconceivable and adorable Godhead, and how shall we have this proof, but by the Spirits doing his work upon the Soul of man, to reach the great design of Christ's Death, in his convincing, Exciting. Reviving and Refreshing Influences upon our heartless Hearts. We must look upon our Praises as Incompleat, although we can say Glory to God who devised our Redemption, and to him who bought it at the price of the most precious Blood that ever was shed, if we cannot add unto him also who has by his Seasonable and incessant Breathings persuaded us to venture our everlasting *all* upon that precious way to Heaven,

ven, and has always maintained the Sense of the happy choice we made, when first we were led in to thee.

Fourthly, We are Debtors to thee for thy offers of Salvation, but we shall never be in Case either to get good of it, or give thee Praises for it, if thou do not allow thy Spirit, to give us a Sense of our Obligations, and set us to our Work: and O what pity is it, that so great things should be lost on us, for want of somewhat more, which could make all reach its design, we have heard *thy Work is perfect*, Deut. 32. 4. and thou bestowest thy Gifts *Liberally*, Ja. 1. 5. and we plead, that belongs to thy Liberality, that thou should give us Mercy in such a way, as we should be the better of it.

Fifthly, This is one of the best ways in all the World to make thyself precious to our Souls, to give us often revivings by the breathings of thy Spirit: If the sweetness of Natural life be so great, that it renders all the means of its Support and Refreshments so desirable, how much more delightful is that Supernatural life of God in the Soul of Man, and how much would it endear unto us the Spring of that life, to feel often the Emanations of it upon our dead and fainting Spirits, We should be ready to say, we will never forget that of which we hold our Life.

C A S E VI. *Complaint of the want of Fervency in Love to God.*

BUT, it may be thou finds it's thy ordinary case, that thou cannot exercise any lively Love of God and Christ, yeathou dare hardly say, thou hast a rational Love to him, and therefore thou concludes thou canst have no reality in the matter of Religion, and that wrathful denunciation, *Let him be accursed who loves not our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Co. 16. 12. has a dreadful sound oftentimes in thine ears, upon this Case thou may Go, and plead with him thus,

First, Lord what a difficult thing do I find it to love thee in sincerity, how much more *with all the Soul and Heart and Strength*, Mark 12. 30. Thou art so Spiritual, it is much for me to take thee up at all, and more for
me

me to be taken up with thee, in these Elevations of Soul that are becoming. I am so under the power of Sense, that I can hardly get one abiding impression of thy Glorious and Spiritual Perfections, these are Ravishing to the Angels and the unbodied People, who are freed from the dulness of such flesh and blood as I have; but to me they cannot be so taking, because not so suited to my mortal state, so wholly swallowed up in what is visible. Thou who said, *that as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*; because *thou knows their frame, and Remembers they are Dust*, Psal. 103. 13, 14. be pleased to consider the disadvantages I suffer by this body, and pardon the weakness of my conceptions of, and affections unto thee.

Secondly, Although thou hast made thy inconceivable Loveliness to be more taking to us, by giving a discovery of it in the Son of God being made Man, whereby thy Glories in the Face of Jesus Christ shine less dazzling, and more sweetly, yet even by this we cannot get up to the exercise of thy Love: O what a sweetness must it be, that when thou hast thine Image upon the Person, (who I must own) has done more for me than all the world, yet I am not captivated with it, even tho' in him, and tho' the loveliness of God, and my poor Nature are wrapt together, yet I can Love the one, and Neglect the other; although in other things relation causes me to Love, as it were by a natural instinct, even where there are no qualifications, the relation thou hast made between God and Man does not allure; this must be a strong and strange aversion, which I desire to lament.

Thirdly, I am forc'd to see a Loveliness in many of thine Attributes, thy Spirituality, Wisdom, Dominion, Power, and especially Mercy and Faithfulness; but there is one of thy Attributes, that turns my stomach naturally against all; thy Holiness, *whereby evil cannot dwell with thee, and Fools shall not stand in thy sight, and thou hatest the workers of Iniquity*, Psal. 5. 4, 5. Because this crosses me so much, I cannot easily be reconcil'd to it, and shall this be the ground of my aversion from God, that's the most Glorious and the Loveliest of all

all his Attributes, that's his very Face and Beauty, O what a Heart must it be, that hates God, because he inclines to act God-like in all his dispensations, in his advancing his own Glory by all means that are suitable, and for that which his Saints so much Celebrate, *Psal.* 30. 4. *Ex.* 15. 11.

Fourthly, I desire to lament it, that when Love should be the life of all my Duties, my Prayers, Hearing, Meditation, and Communicating, all is dead, all is dead for want of Love, and tho' I covenanted sometimes with a special Eye to this, that Light and Life and Love might all be forth-coming to me, as I should need, yet I find little or nothing of these; this must be discouraging.

Fifthly, Better it were I had no Heart to Love any thing at all, than thus to be dead to God who gave me Life; and dead almost to nothing so much as unto him. O how much all my capacity to Love is lost, when it can never reach up to God, and basely and sacrilegiously thrown away, when mis-bestowed on any thing beside; shall I thus put contempt upon God, that gave me Affections, by saying, I love any thing before him, and when nothing will admit of my Love, I'll court him out of a mercenary Respect, because I know he can do me a good Turn, when all things else are useless? I am afraid thou wilt reckon my not loving thee in Prosperity base, and my loving thee in Adversity only for Relief little better.

Sixthly, What a dissimulation must it be, and an impudence also for me, to be always making Prayer to God, with a show of Humility for Mercy, and giving thee thanks, and in the mean time not a grain of sincere Love in all this? It's bold dealing to God's Face, who searches all Hearts. I would count it baseness to be seeking Favours of them we abhor, fond to praise them whom we hate is little better than to mock them, and to mock thee at this rate, is too great an adventure for any Soul to make.

C A S E VII. *Want of the Pleasures of Religion.*

IT may be thou cannot deny that thou loves God, but thou find very little of the sweetness and joy of Duty,

ty, which thou oft-times most tastelessly performs, thou may plead for this by such *Arguments* as these.

First, Lord thou hast implanted into Nature a strange love of Peace and Pleasure, and all the Creatures are still working in pursuit of these; may not I seek them rather in Religion, as in any thing else? I am sure if thou allow us them in the Creature, thou doest much more in thyself; and if I could find them with thee, it would make that strong current of desire after them run in the right Channel, how happily would duty and delight be united! and here I should not exceed as I do in other things.

Secondly, Let me get as much Joy in thy way, as will outbid the Pleasures of the World, that are oft-times courting my Affections, and then I shall answer the Temptations of Life by an Argument of their own; I feel a sweetness already in a stream, that's neither so muddy nor shallow, as that which would take me off from God, and how shall I leave my *Sweetness*, to reign over, if it were all the things of time? Judg. 9. 11.

Thirdly, I know not how many a bitter Storm may be to go over my Soul ere I finish my Journey in this Wilderness, and if I get not some experience of the Joys of the Holy Ghost, which I may look back unto, as well as for the present Life upon, I am afraid my Faith shall not be able to bear me through; whereas if I have these, the very remembrance of them shall be useful, when the renewing of them may be denied, and I should frequently entertain myself in dark and dismal Hours with such an Exercise, *I will never forget thy Statutes, for by them thou hast quickned me*, Psal. 119. 93.

Fourthly, Go and say to him, it is but reasonable, that he should be serv'd in such a manner, as will declare he is worthy of all chearful obedience, and as we may be in case to commend his way to others by this Argument, it is not inconsistent with the Laws of his House to have the Garments of Joy for our every day's Habit, nor is it necessary to be always discouraged, why should that be ground to object to any of thine, *wherefore looks thou so lean from day to day, being the King's Son*, 2 Sam. 13. 4.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Did thou not promise; that thou would take him who laid bold upon thy Covenant, and bring him to thy holy Mountain, and make him joyful in thy house of Prayer, Isa. 56. 7. when I find nothing of this, I think I have too good Reason to suspect the reality of my engagements unto thee, it seems I am not of the number of these, *for whom joy and gladness is sown, even the upright*, Psa. 97. 11. for if I were, I could not but find them growing up at some time or other, and the Fruits of the Holy Ghost are *Righteousness, Joy and Peace*, Rom. 14. 17. Gal. 5. 22. and can he be with me who knows so little of these.

Sixthly, If thou would give me thy Joy, it would not only contribute to my Interest, but to thine: for by this I would be able to give thee a far greater Rent of Glory, all my duties would have an other kind of liveliness and favouriness, than what are now, and I would be far oftner at them; if the sweetness of them were to draw me, than when meer Custom, or natural Conscience drags me to them, and I would go forth in them, *as a strong Man rejoicing to run his Race*, Psa. 19. 5. with a vigour such as we exert for the sense of Pleasure, with how much earnestness, and edginess would I be employed in digging deep into the very Life and Power of Godliness, because the greatest Measures of Pleasures are to be found there, and thus *the joy of the Lord should many ways be my strength*, Neh. 8. 10.

CASE VIII. *Wilful Inconstancy of Frame.*

BUT, tho' thou seem to have some times no small allowance of this Joy, thou complain thy *Frame* appears to thee sometimes lively, and e're thou art aware it's gone, so as thou thinks thyself worse as before: Go to God upon this, and lay thy Case before him so,

First, Lord I cannot get solid Comfort, nor give thee praises for any of my *Frames*, because they bear still too much the sad mark of these, of whom thou said, *their Goodness was as the Morning Cloud, and early Dew which passes away*, Hos. 6. 4. For when I would gladly bless thee for attainments, my Heart tells me, it may

may be I am blessing thee for what I have not, and this will be found but a lying unto God with my Tongue, and a mocking of thee, and a woeful deceiving myself, and thus I dare not pay thee the Revenue which is due for thy Work of Grace.

Secondly, Hast thou not said, *He that believeth on me out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Waters*, Joh. 7. 38, 39. When thou spake of the Holy Ghost, that he should receive, to assure us that there is in all Believers a fresh and never failing Spring of Grace, and must mine only be like a standing Pool, or Lake, that the Summer's heat of more favourable Providences, or the Winter Frost of more Cross, shall dry up? I have heard *the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. So as no Clouds nor Storms can hinder its advances, what shall I say of mine, that looks like a Sun setting in the Morning or Forenoon of day?

Thirdly, Many short and uncertain Warmnesses in thy Matters leave me under a greater Coolness, than I think I should have had, if I had never experienced them; alas! that these fits and starts of Seriousness should only be preparatives to make deadness in, and distaste of Duty take the deeper upon my Carnal and weary Heart, I am afraid my *staying long in the place of the breaking forth of Children*, Hos. 13. 13. imperfect Resolutions, imperfect Engagements shall prove dangerous and deadly.

Fourthly, Thou knows how long a time and how great a labour it costs me, to attain to any tolerable *Frame*, and shall it all vanish before I get the relish of its sweetness, or its fruit? This is to be long toiling at breaking the shell of Duty, and when I get through that, the Kernel is snatched away, and so I have a wearisome Seed-time, and Harvest of disappointment, Hos. 8. 7.

Fifthly, Hast thou not said that Religion consists in doing? and must I always have a *Frame* that brings me the length only of resolving? This is always to be beginning, and never going further, for my seriousness leaves me before I can bring any thing to perfection: and

and when my *Frame* returns again after a long discontinuance, I begin again with the same trifling Resolutions I had before, which grows still more and more tasteless, the longer they are repeated to no effect, O what kind of Sowing must this be, in which the Corn is always blasted, as soon as the blade appears green above the ground? It looks not like the Sowing of *which we shall reap everlasting Life*, Gal. 6. 8. it's rather like that which is fallen under the Curse, let it be like *the Grass upon the House tops, withered e're it be grown*, Psal. 129. 6. Nay I am afraid my Resolutions fill the Eye, and keep me off from our Lord Jesus Christ.

CASE IX. *Doubtings of the Fundamental Truths.*

BUT, It may be thou hast a sadder thing to complain of than all these, that thou hast a Heart that cannot believe the great and *Fundamental Truths* of Religion, and indeed this is a thing that looks very terrible, and calls for thy wrestling with God by an extraordinary application, which thou may form after this Manner.

First, I find that according to my believing or not believing everlasting things, my seriousness rises or falls, grows or decays; and my very doubtings about thee, cut the throat of my aspirings, so that I can hardly breathe after the remedy I come to seek of God against them, and thou knows *if the foundations be destroyed what can I do*, Psal. 11. 3. all my Religious performances are but like building in the Air, costly and painful work of meer imagination, why should I go a step further, if that which should be the first step be never made? wherefore is all this waste of time and strength? for I can call it no better, when I am always laboriously doing nothing.

Secondly, I am afraid I have taken up my belief upon the credit of these I was born among, and have it not deeply and solidly laid on thy Testimony, and I am persuaded *soundness of mind*, believing the truths of God upon God's own evidences, and having heaven's demonstrations for the things of Heaven, is a rare privilege,

ledge, and can only be obtained from thee; *O let not my Faith stand in the Wisdom of men, but in the Power of God even in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.*
1 Cor. 2. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Lord I desire to lament that my capacity is so suited to the conceptions of the trifles of this life, but so far disproportioned to the principal and brightest Truths, although they be written on almost every thing I see and feel, *O what meeting with darkness in the day time, and groping in the noon day as in the night is this? Job, 5. 14. I grope as if I had no eyes, I stumble at noon-day as in the night, Isa. 59. 10. when I cannot see God.*

Fourthly, At least give me as much of Faith, as shall prevail against my doubtings so far as to justify its own reality, by holding me always under concern about Everlasting things greater than what I have for all things beside; let my endeavours for thee and Heaven, force their way through all opposition an evil world, and a worse heart makes to them, that so I may have ground to conclude, it must be persuasion of thee, that has brought me the length of *forsaking all and following thee.*

C A S E X. *A Heartlessness in all Performances.*

BUT Oh what a dulness, yea stupidity is this I feel my Spirit under! for ordinary it's rather like Death itself than a meer deadness in my disposition, it's sad in the mean time, and betokens worse, make thy Arguments upon this head to this purpose,

First, Lord, can a Soul that is so unaffected with God, with Heaven and Glory, and all that is Great and Eternal, as mine is, be free of a predominant Atheism and infidelity? I think this kind of withering that is upon the leaves of my profession, and rottenness in the fruit of my duties, do say there is such a worm as one of these at the root of all, I will be greatly moved with the proposal of some dying vanity of time, or the threatening of the loss of some shadow or other, because I believe there is a reality in these; and yet all that is said of thee works no more upon me, than if Everlasting

ing things were but words that perish as soon as spoken.

Secondly, Art not thou the God of Life? Natural, Spiritual and Eternal, is all of thee; it's thy manner to bestow Life on thy dying Creature, it will cost thee but a very little to bid me live, and if thou say the word, even spiritual death itself the most senseless of all things shall rise up to obey. O how suitable is it to him who is the spring of Life, with whom is *the fountain and vein of Lives*, Psal. 36. 9. to let a drop of that Spring fall on such a dead dry useless piece of dust as I am, which could make me Fresh and Green, Fragrant and Fruitful in a moment, thou loves rather to take thy precious Names from the Actings of Grace, than of Nature, and if thou would do this Gracious thing for me, I would call thee the God of my Life, *Psal. 42. 8.* upon far sweeter and more valuable accounts, than the most prosperous Natural man can do.

Thirdly, What a strange and sad thing is this that my approaching so often to thee, who art Life and Love, should have so little usefulness for my revival: our drawing near the Natural Sun brings heat upon us necessarily, our looking to great things raises a kind of Greatness of thought, and walking with the Wise makes Wise, but our coming into thy presence seems rather to deaden the Soul, *though in thy presence be fulness of joy*, Psal. 16. 1.

Fourthly, Hast thou not said, *He that believeth on the Son of God, although he were dead yet shall he live*, John, 11. 23. because he is the Resurrection and the Life. O help to this great attainment, which is the first cause and also the exerting of the vital acts of a Soul, because it unites with the root, from which the vital sap does flow to him who never knew Spiritual Life before, and also it is that which sets all the veins of the Believer's Soul a working under his most sinking deadness.

CASE XI. *Not making any sensible Advance by Ordinances.*

IT may be thou art saying, what shall I make of this, that I am continually following a course of Duty,

ty, and I find myself nothing bettered by it, but rather worse: this cannot but make weariness and tempt to give over, upon this lay out the sense of thy case so.

First, Can there be any thing more sad, than to be always going further from God by all the means, by which others have been brought near him, shall I thus pray, meditate, hear and Communicate myself out of sight and sense of God altogether? to have my Meat and Drink Cursed to me, *Mic. 6. 14.* by being incapable of giving Nourishment or sickning me on every taking, is lamentable, but to have my Prayers and Communion cursed is a far more dreadful instance of wrath.

Secondly, Lord, when poor Nature alone is at constant exercise, I see increase and strength the fruits of it, Habits grow by Acts, the Husbandman's Seed time brings a Harvest, and the Merchant's adventuring a Rich return from far; O cannot Grace do as much as Nature! it is not suitable to its Honour that it should not; but alas it is a shrewd Symptom, that I have none, that I am never better by my long continued poor and worthless pains.

Thirdly, Hast thou not said, *The upright shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9.* And, *the path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. 4. 18.* And *they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, Isa. 40. 31.* If I be among the number of these, how is it with me this day, wherein I am so far short of what I think I once was? I am afraid that because my Religion has not had root, it has straight *Sprung up and withered away, Mark, 4. 4. 5.*

Fourthly, Thou knowest, to work for nothing makes exceeding laziness in any Case, and when I am still giving out, and never getting any thing in, I cannot long hold on. It is true my outgivings are little worth, but they are Labour and Toil to him that can do little more; and I will come to that at length, I will rather sit idle as be always working idle.

Fifthly, Thou gives the Art to manage things in Nature, in order to increase. *The Plowman's God does instruct him for his labour, Isa. 28. 26. 29.* that it may

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be Successful, and if thou does instruct and teach him discretion, *and this comes from the Lord who is wonderful in council*, that he orders his Ground right, it must come from thee, that I can order my heart, an unfavourable Soil, and sow for Heaven there, I hope thou wilt be as ready to shew me how to sow for Heaven, as how bread-Corn is to be bruised.

Sixthly, I know the solicitous husbandman may labour most skilfully and painfully, and yet there shall be no returns if heaven do not its part by Rain to refresh the Earth, and heat to ripen the Fruits; and if it be so in Nature, it is no less so in Grace: he that planteth and he that watereth is nothing here, thou thyself only can give the increase. One of thine asked, *is there any among the Vanities of the Gentiles, that can give rain? or can the Heaven give Showers? art not thou he, O Lord? therefore we will wait on thee: thou hast made all these things*, Jer. 14. 22. There is none among my poor vain and worthless attempts, that can give success to me, therefore thou hast allowed me to look to thee for it.

C A S E XII. *Want of lively views of God's Face.*

IF it be thy complaint, although I be still making a fashion of waiting on God, I cannot say that ever he lifts up the light of his Countenance, so as to give me distinct and *lively views* of him, which could yield a Satisfaction, as the sensible presence of those I value does: on this Case thou may plead so.

First, If Absalom counted it so great a ground of Complaint, *I have stayed so long at Jerusalem and have not seen the King's Face*, 2 Sam. 14. 32. What shall I say for that I am still hanging on about Ordinances, and can never have a lively sight of the God of them? Sometimes I am tempted to think it had not been so sad to have been born where they were not to be found, as to live at this rate surrounded with God's light and never able to comprehend it.

Secondly, O! How far has the curiosity of some men carried them for seeing a creature, that had either some-
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thing of Strangeness, or rare beauty in it? what a shame is it that I have no more Ambition to see God, the Original light and Glory, and who is all wonder even to him who knows most of him? We are taken with fair and Admirable things, may I see thee who can outbid all the Creation for both these.

Thirdly, Thou knows what a Luxury of the eyes which cannot be satisfied I am guilty of, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with Hearing, *Ecc. 1. 8.* and the thirsty eyes are gadding abroad perpetually after all that can entertain them, one sight of thee could Cure them of that Disease, thou can look beauty into deformity, and all created light into Darknes, and if thou would open up thine excellencies to me, this should leave me restless, till I should get further Views, that would entice me on to that view which makes the Beatifick Vision.

Fourthly, Thou knows the Creatures cannot live or grow, without this Sun of Nature Dispensing his benign Influences, thy Countenance is more to me than the light and heat of it can be to them, as thou shows it I must revive, *and as thou withdraws I decay*, *Psal. 143. 7.* *for if thou hide thy face I must be like them who go down to the pit and cannot escape to be troubled*, *Psal. 30. 7.*

Fifthly, As all things look fair in this lower Creation only by the light of the Sun, so by the light of thy Countenance lifted up on me shall all things look comfortable: if the light of Nature can make the most solitary and dismal places somewhat agreeable, the sight of God shall make my saddest Afflictions appear as fair as Prosperity can be without it, and infinitely more.

Sixthly, I see the desire of all thy People has been to come and appear before God, *the living God*, *Psal. 42. 2.* and *63. 2.* and there must be some excellent thing in this discovery, which has made all them that ever had it say, *they were made very glad in the light of thy Countenance*, *Psal. 21. 6.* *Act. 2. 28.* and to have it for their Prayer ever afterward, *turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity*, *Psal. 119. 37.*

CASE XIII. *Unwilling Thoughts of, and meeting with Communion.*

BUT it may be thou art saying sometimes, what a sore matter is it that I should never hear of a Communion coming in any place near by, but it makes a damp upon my Spirit, and when I hear it is drawing on in the place I am most nearly concerned in, it works a direct Terror; for I find I am in this sad strait, I must Communicate, by reason of the awful Command, and yet I dare not for fear of doing it unworthily, and that is Damnation under a special Certification, what shall I do? It were less if I were only afraid to approach, because of being out of Frame, but I think I see myself Fundamentally wrong, not having honestly engaged unto God; at least I cannot aver I have sincerity, which will justify the reality of my state of Grace: Go and plead for help in this Case also by such Arguments as these.

First, Thou hast said, *Thou wilt look to the Man that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembles at thy word*, Isa. 66. 2. when thou wilt not regard a Building as stately as the vanity of Man can make it, if thou respect such, may not I plead, shew some regard to one that trembles so much at thy most awful Ordinance, which thou hast railed about with threatnings of hot burning wrath on the rash Adventurer, I hope thou wilt not condemn altogether my fears which flow from the apprehensions of the Dreadfulness of a place, which is no other than the Gate of Heaven and House of God, Gen. 28. 27.

Secondly, I would far rather be among the number of those, whose Humility thou commends, *for that they sat down in the lower Room, and whom the Master of the Feast bid go up higher*, Luke 14. 10. than among those who sit down in the higher place, and are brought out of it with a Rebuke for Presumption, as having nothing to do there, and I hope it will not be so dangerous to use a jealous backwardness, even tho' a fault, as to

meet with that woeful Challenge, *Friend how camest thou in hither? not having the Wedding Garment*, Mat. 22. 12.

Thirdly, I would gladly plead with the poor Woman of Canaan, *Yet Lord the Dogs eat of the Crumbs that fall from the Childrens Table*, Math. 15. 27. Tho' I dare not call myself a Child, yet I reckon him only and eternally happy who is one, and his provisions are such that even those who have the scantiest allowance are well entertain'd, I cannot tell if I may sit down at the Table with them, but I would be near, and catch as earnestly as I may such offers of Mercy as are going, and tho' I dare not plead a right, I would plead a need, if I may not plead the claim of the Child, let me plead the claim of the Dog, and Humility never displeases thee.

Fourthly, A Fear to approach thee in this great Duty, seems but suitable to the order thou hast given about it, for thou hast beset that great Command, so let him eat of this Bread, with a Sea of Guilt upon the one Hand, *he that eats unworthily is guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord*, and a Sea of Wrath on the other, *he eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself*, 1 Cor. 11. 27, 28, 29. so that when I stand for my safety upon the Rock that is between the two, *let him examine himself*, I tremble to think how ready I am to fall over into these Gulfs.

Fifthly, Shall it be always so with me, that the greatest Mercy in all the World shall be an affrightment unto me, I know one thing that would help it, and which thou alone can give, even my being resolved so to be for God as most resolutely to part with all Affection to known Sin, and thoroughly to comply with all Duty, and then getting such a sense of interest in thee, as could make me humbly confident to avow it, not only in a day of Communion, but in the day of Death, that shall put all Communion work to the Tryal.

CASE XIV. *Pleading for dispositions for a Communion.*

AND now more than ordinary Work comes on, for I think he that has a *Communion* work to manage, should require of himself such a frame as would be

be fit dying work, and O how much goes to prepare for either! I am in a great strait with it, both by reason of my manifold Guilt, and insuperable indisposition, can I go to this work under such a lifeless and heartless temper of Soul as this? what can I expect of it, but making my bonds stronger? and am I not dead enough already, that I must deaden myself more by this Ordinance, till I be in the case of them that are twice dead, once dead by the Law, and far more sadly dead by one of the most favourable means of the Gospel? Go to God with this concernment and plead,

First, Hast thou not appointed this Ordinance for proving a mean of revival to the Soul, that complains it cannot find Life at any hand, I have tried Prayer, Preaching, Meditation and Converse, and all of them say it is not in me, may I believe thou hast reserv'd the honour of restoring and refreshing my Soul to this Solemnity, upon which I would gladly hope, many have said of this as one of thine said of Goliath's Sword, in extremity *there is none like it*, 1 Sam. 2. 29.

Secondly, Thou knows I look upon *Communicating* under a prevalent indisposition like dying under Darkness, and hardness of Heart, and O what an uncomfortable Case would this be! the very apprehensions of it at a distance are a Terror; and I am afraid my many dead *Communion*s prognosticate sadly to me, that I shall at least in a great measure, miss thy living Consolations in my dying Hours.

Thirdly, I have often heard that I cannot but either have a great advantage, or a sad loss by such a Duty as this, and how much does it concern me, that I may not run myself into a Snare, that perhaps I shall never be able to deliver myself from all my Days! since there is just now so much at the stake, and I am to have a throw for it, O please to manage my Heart and Hand so, as I may fall upon the better Part, and bless thee Eternally for giving me Council and Assistance to do so.

Fourthly, How great is my Work when I have not only to do, but undo, to do away so much Guilt of a long Life, and the rooted habits of Infidelity, Carnality,

lity, Pride, and Trifling in the things of God, and O, even that poor half of my work is above my Time and Strength, what shall I do with the rest and better part of it, to be distinct and lively in the actings of Faith, Love, Heavenliness, Hope and Joy in thee, which are such Strangers to my Soul.

Fifthly, I have had a long time to prepare for this Work, and now when I am come this length, I cannot tell what I have done with it, after I have been toying all Night, and have catch'd nothing, if thou would but give me but one hopeful Word, I would yet *cast out the Net*, Luke 5. 5. thy Spirit breathes like the Wind, *John* 3. 8. that rises oft-times in a dead calm when little expected, let me be surprised at length, when *I am almost weary of my waiting*, Psal. 69. 3. and let me see an Hour, yea a Moment of God's influences can do more than all these Days and Weeks of poor unassisted endeavours of Man have done.

C A S E XV. *For Lively sense of Heaven in Communicating.*

I Would gladly have a day of *Communion* made a day much to be observed by my Soul, upon the account of great things done for it, and I desire to entertain raised Expectations of this, and I think I am allowed not to be put off with small. For this go to him thus;

First, Lord, is not such an occasion call'd a *Communion*? and I always thought this signified a *Communion* with thee, full of Friendship, Access and Familiarity, and shall it only be call'd and not found such by me? Thou that gave the Name give the Thing to answer it: how hard shall it be, if I shall be said only to have got a Nominal *Communion*, and nothing of the real! Shall my solemn Work be only a practical specious lye before the World, when I am giving it out at thy table, that I have what I really know nothing of?

Secondly, Thou allows me to call other days of Grace, even ordinary Sabbaths, Good days, because thou would have me to make them so; but I may call a *Communion Day* a great Day, and a high Day, *John* 19.

31. shall I not find it such by more of God and Heaven upon my Soul than ordinary? and this only will oblige me to give it that Name.

Thirdly, I know thou hast made this poor World to be a very Valley of Trouble and Tears to thine own especially, but yet thou hast allowed them some good Days in it, and if it were not so they could not bear through in the ill that are so many and bitter. O when shall they find these Sun-shines amidst the Storms, if not at *Communion Seasons*, wherein they may expect God will come down, and deal familiarly with Man! if it were not for some such lucid intervals, many of thy People could not think of staying out their weary time here.

Fourthly, May I get as much on such a Market Day, as may carry me on happily unto the next, and that through all such Provision-places on the road, I may be brought to Glory at length, and if thou wilt make the Rain to fall and *fill the Pools* I shall continue digging them while *travelling thro' the Valley of Baca*, Psal. 84. 6. Thou knows many a bitter storm may be in my Face, many a dark and dismal like hour of Tryals, terrors and tremblings may be awaiting me, and it cannot be little acquaintance with and experience of Thee and thy Way, that can answer all such Days of Need.

Fifthly, I would *eat for a long journey*, 1 Kings 19. 7. of Death, that is before me, and may I manage so this opportunity as the remembrance of it may meet me with an unexpressible comfort, when all the things of Earth, will disclaim to be of any use or relish unto me.

CASE XVI. *Direction in the first Adventure.*

THis may be the first time of drawing near to God in the solemn work of *Communicating*, and it imports thee very much to summon up all the seriousness thou art capable of, even with an Eye to this, that thou may be well guided in thy first Adventure; turn it into Prayer so,

lity, Pride, and Trifling in the things of God, and O, even that poor half of my work is above my Time and Strength, what shall I do with the rest and better part of it, to be distinct and lively in the actings of Faith, Love, Heavenliness, Hope and Joy in thee, which are such Strangers to my Soul.

Fifthly, I have had a long time to prepare for this Work, and now when I am come this length, I cannot tell what I have done with it, after I have been toying all Night, and have catch'd nothing, if thou would but give me but one hopeful Word, I would yet *cast out the Net*, Luke 5. 5. thy Spirit breathes like the Wind, *John* 3. 8. that rises oft-times in a dead calm when little expected, let me be surprised at length, when I am almost weary of my waiting, *Psal.* 69. 3. and let me see an Hour, yea a Moment of God's influences can do more than all these Days and Weeks of poor unassisted endeavours of Man have done.

C A S E XV. *For Lively sense of Heaven in Communicating.*

I Would gladly have a day of *Communion* made a day much to be observed by my Soul, upon the account of great things done for it, and I desire to entertain raised Expectations of this, and I think I am allowed not to be put off with small. For this go to him thus;

First, Lord, is not such an occasion call'd a *Communion*? and I always thought this signified a *Communion* with thee, full of Friendship, Access and Familiarity, and shall it only be call'd and not found such by me? Thou that gave the Name give the Thing to answer it: how hard shall it be, if I shall be said only to have got a Nominal *Communion*, and nothing of the real! Shall my solemn Work be only a practical specious lye before the World, when I am giving it out at thy table, that I have what I really know nothing of?

Secondly, Thou allows me to call other days of Grace, even ordinary Sabbaths, Good days, because thou would have me to make them so; but I may call a *Communion Day* a great Day, and a high Day, *John* 19.

31. shall I not find it such by more of God and Heaven upon my Soul than ordinary? and this only will oblige me to give it that Name.

Thirdly, I know thou hast made this poor World to be a very Valley of Trouble and Tears to thine own especially, but yet thou hast allowed them some good Days in it, and if it were not so they could not bear through in the ill that are so many and bitter. O when shall they find these Sun-shines amidst the Storms, if not at *Communion Seasons*, wherein they may expect God will come down, and deal familiarly with Man! if it were not for some such lucid intervals, many of thy People could not think of staying out their weary time here.

Fourthly, May I get as much on such a Market Day, as may carry me on happily unto the next, and that through all such Provision-places on the road, I may be brought to Glory at length, and if thou wilt make the Rain to fall and *fill the Pools* I shall continue digging them while *travelling thro' the Valley of Baca*, Psal. 84. 6. Thou knows many a bitter storm may be in my Face, many a dark and dismal like hour of Tryals, terrors and tremblings may be awaiting me, and it cannot be little acquaintance with and experience of Thee and thy Way, that can answer all such Days of Need.

Fifthly, I would *eat for a long journey*, 1 Kings 19. 7. of Death, that is before me, and may I manage so this opportunity as the remembrance of it may meet me with an unexpressible comfort, when all the things of Earth, will disclaim to be of any use or relish unto me.

CASE XVI. *Direction in the first Adventure.*

THis may be the first time of drawing near to God in the solemn work of *Communicating*, and it imports thee very much to summon up all the seriousness thou art capable of, even with an Eye to this, that thou may be well guided in thy first Adventure; turn it into Prayer so,

First, Let me get my first approach well managed, for there is much in breaking fair, and it is very probable, I shall find my Case through most of my Days in a great measure according to my way of first *Communicating*: if I deal deceitfully in God's Covenant, I may have much ado to get above it all my Life. O! therefore let me be honest in this, that it may be like precious well chosen seed Corn, which shall yield a noble increase in the following of all thy other Ordinances.

Secondly, I took on Baptismal engagements, or rather my Parents took them on for me, when I knew not what was a doing; but now I must be personally explicate and distinct, and all the weight of the Work lyes upon myself, being that none in this Case can stand for me, and at this time I am to declare whether my Baptismal Vows be altogether lost, or whether they shall turn to any good account, he has in a great degree lost his Baptism, who cannot find a Heart for thy Supper.

CASE XVII. *A Frame for a Farewell Communion.*

BUT it may be it enters into thy thoughts with a deep impression, that this may be the last time that thou shalt be witness and sharer of this priviledge, it concerns thee therefore to request,

First, O! how seriously ought that to be managed, which is never to be done again, and with what liveliness of Soul should I bid farewell to Ordinances, Sacraments and Prayer, and all that I have found any way made useful, for advancing me to Heaven.

Secondly, I have now a noble opportunity of *paying Vows, which my Lips uttered, and my Mouth spake, when Trouble was upon me, Psal. 66. 13, 14.* as well as of making them of new; did I not then lye upon Knees of Soul and Body before God, protesting that if he would give me a day fit for it, I would make well grounded and zealous appearances for him: and now since this may be my last happy opportunity, O! what a pity is it I should go off this Stage, without leaving some Testimony that he hath done great things for such as I am, *Psal. 66. 16.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, If I could perform this work with an extraordinary vigour of Soul, I might probably carry the fresh sense of it with me to the Valley of the shadow of Death, and it would be no small Cordial for me there, to think it is not long since my Soul humbly said, *O Lord, thou art my Lord*, Psal. 16. *also my Record is in Heaven and my Witness on high*, 2 Job. 16. 19. and he gave his *Amen*, and set the Seals to it. I Remember the Place and the Day, but the reflection that the last Communion work was unsuitably done, will be a very unhelpful Companion.

Fourthly, I find I have more Arguments of seriousness than I ever had before, I see a Death and Judgment far nearer than formerly, my Sins are grown to a greater Number, and need a very broad covering of Righteousness, and I am, or may be sensible of my vast short-comings of resolved and hoped for Attainments, more now than before; do not all these cry aloud, a greater seriousness than I used to have at this Work is now necessary?

CASE XXVIII. *Complaint of a strange Heartlessness in me, daily after a Communion.*

BUT, what shall I say when I find my heart, to my sense, more dead after a *Communion Work* than at any time, so as I cannot get any relish of the precious things of God maintain'd, tho' I thought I had it before the day of Solemnity? Thou may plead to this purpose against this evil,

First, I cannot but say it must be a base and mercenary temper of Spirit I am always of, that I am so busy and humble in requesting thee before the *Communion* day, when I have some great thing to look for, which can only be had at thy hand; and when that Day is over, I turn strangely neglectful of thee, *Psal.* 78. 35. 36. as if I had now got my turn done, and thou were no more to be owned, but for fashion's-sake, till the next occasion wherein I'll have much to do to return.

Secondly, As I cannot think, that preparation for such a Work is the Labour of a Day, or a Month, but rather

ther of a tract of Life, so I cannot think the fulfilling of my Engagements is to be put over in the days in which I made them, and not rather that the easiest of all is the *Communion* day, for debt is always sweetest in the taking on; have I not on such a day given all the days of my Life much ado, when I said that I would be, and act for God, as long as I could act any thing, and from the very first occasion must I fall to the verifying of this, and not intermit a day, *but daily perform my Vows*, Psal. 61. 8.

Thirdly, How can this Heart think to hold out in a state of Glory, without interruption, and yet without wearying through endless Ages; when it is such a burden to wait upon God some few Days or hours. I must either give up my pretensions unto that state, the whole of which lyes in that, *there his Servants shall serve him, whose rest is never to cease*, Rev. 22. and 4. 3. 8. or else endeavour to have my dispositions more attuned unto it.

Fourthly, What shall I answer for wearying of God, of Christ and Heaven, *Isa.* 43. 22. which hath so much contempt in it; I am sure if any should weary of my company, so much as I find myself to weary of thine, I would bestow it upon another. O how unworthy of Life is he that practically prefers almost any thing to the God of that Life! and do not I so, when I can endure almost any thing longer than being in thy Presence?

Fifthly, I cannot but look upon it as a fearful symptom, that I am so contrary to the common sense of all the Saints; when they are in any measure at themselves, they count access unto God, liveliness in Duty, delighting in things of God, worthy to be matter of request, and when they attain them, of giving God praise: can these be a burden and a terror unto my Soul?

Sixthly, O Lord, I acknowledge, I have not only need to keep a fast before this awful Ordinance I have adventured upon, that I may humble myself and beg of thee preparation; but I have need to keep a Fast after it, for guilt in the performance, and indisposition following upon, and I am afraid, flowing from it; and

it must be discouraging, that a sinking sense of this is all I have ordinarily for the joy of the Lord, which this Ordinance, if any, uses to afford. How much does it dash my thanksgivings, which I owe for the greatest mercy that thou ever bestowed upon Man. To find my frame as it were professedly declaring I have no Interest in it ?

Seventhly, It's a sad token that my spiritual provision makes still a sickness, fainting and loathing with me, and it evidences there is some prevalent Distemper within the Vitals, that the Nourishment never can subdue, but which turns all to uselessness and hurtfulness, so as it feeds upon these precious things, that were ordained for Life.

Eighthly, It gives me sometimes a rueful suspicion, I am too like that Traitor, unto whom the *Devil entered after the Sop*, Joh. 13. 27. that my Heart rages after one Vanity or another, immediately after *Communion Work*, as much (if not more) as at any time.

CASE XIX. *Pleadings for the Blessings of a Sabbath.*

THOU desires to have the Sabbath-day made very reviving and refreshing to thy Soul, and it is oft-times thy complaint, that many in former times have had better frames on every day of the Week, than thou hast upon thy Sabbath, and on their Sabbaths more elevation of Soul, than thou hast in thy Communion Solemnities. Thou may represent this before the Throne of Grace, so,

First, Thou hast made *the Sabbath for Man, not Man for the Sabbath*, Mark 2. 27. I desire to look upon it as a privilege, and I know that it was appointed for greater measures of access to thee, and delighting in thee than ordinary ; I hope thou wilt not suffer so noble an institution to fall utterly short of its design, but since thou hast made it for us, let us have the good of it.

Secondly, The business and distractions of the Week eat out my frame, and I believe thou hast appointed the Sabbath to return so often, that so good impressions may

may not quite wear out, and I would be greatly obliged, if thou would make the Sabbath recover my lost Taste and Savour of thee, and things of Heaven.

Thirdly, Since thou calls me from the business of Life, to waiting upon thee, so as to mind nothing else, I hope thou wilt give me more than will make up all the loss the worldling thinks himself at, by interrupting his career after the things of this Life for a day, and reward all my pains; and my near approach unto thee, being brought unto thy Holy Mountain, and made joyful in the House of Prayer, Isa. 56. 7. shall do it, and infinitely more.

Fourthly, O give me such impressions on a Sabbath-day, as shall be seasoning to my Soul through all the Week, and make all the duties of Religion go the better, through the rest of my days: for I desire to look upon such an opportunity as a Market-day, in which I am to provide myself with fresh supplies, to carry on my Journey to Heaven.

Fifthly, I take the Sabbath to be a day for giving relief of Spirit, from the perplexities of ordinary Week-day Thoughts and Cares, it's the blest retreat from the confusions and storms that are about us for most of our time, in which as upon a couch we may lay our Cares and Troubles.

Sixthly, Thou used to honour this day by doing great Things on it; among Men there are days of hospitality, wherein they used to keep open House, and entertain Strangers liberally; as all days are such with thee, so the Sabbath in a special manner, and as thou hast said a fast was to be kept, by undoing the heavy Burthens and letting the oppressed go free, by dealing our Bread to the hungry, and bringing the Poor, who are cast out, into our House; we hope we may argue with thee, thou wilt honour thy Sabbath, by doing such things for us, and we come to thee in a good day, a day appointed for Feasting and Rejoycing, in which Men are most liberal.

Seventhly, This is the day on which we desire to celebrate thee to the end of the World, upon the account of the noble Original of it, even the rising of our Lord
Jesus

Jesus Christ, from Death, upon the fairest Morning that ever shin'd on Earth, that shin'd with more than Rays of the Natural Sun ; for two Suns rose that day ; both the never dying Lamp of Nature, and the Sun of Righteousness, without which all our days had been perpetual Darkness ; and as he rose that day, he rose in order to Ascension, that he might give Gifts unto Men, to which it's very suitable thou should do so for us this day.

Eighthly, The Sabbath is an emblem of that everlasting day of the visions of thy Face, wherein thy Servants shall serve thee without weariness : may it always put us in remembrance of that, and incite us to an elevation of Soul somewhat answerable to the hopes of that Glory, and to the work thy Saints are doing in the higher House.

CASE XX. *Fears of Death in Youth, or midst of Days.*

IT may be that thou art sometimes discomposed with the thoughts of this that it shall be thy lot to die in the flower of thy Life, and the very supposition of it is ungrateful ; but thou must prepare for a case which thou hast seen to be so usual : and in order to it, go and deal with the God of thy Life, to this purpose.

First, Lord, thou knows it's a great matter, for one to have all his Work put by before the *midst of Days*, to be making ready for dying requires the application of a long Life, and they who have had the longest and busiest day, when they came to the last, have thought they had something yet further to do, e're they could make the important step into Eternity : it cannot but affect me that I should get less time than many of the most earnest wrestlers with God : it's true I deserve it less, but need it more than they.

Secondly, Thou knows nature is strong in the spring of my Age, and Life that is fresh is full of natural sweetness, and the comforts of life have a strong impression upon him that has not yet learned the vanity of it, by the experience of many troubles, that riper years always bring ; it is not easy to get all those overcome,

so

so as to be willing to die, and therefore I will need a great measure of Grace to subdue them and me to a kindly submission, in such a case: only give me this, what matter though I should die, having a short life, and a scanty measure of it's pleasures, if full of the Holy Ghost; this shall do more than make up the want of what I and all young Persons are so naturally bent upon, *length of Days*.

Thirdly, Thou hast made *length of Days* a great Blessing, and hast been pleas'd to propose it as an excitement to Obedience in one of thy Commands, *Exod. 20. 12*. I take it as such, and therefore am very ready to look upon the denial of it as a Judgment: did thou not promise to the Man that set his Love upon thee, *thou would satisfy him with length of Days, and make his Eyes to see thy Salvation*, *Psal. 91. 16*. allow me to plead with thee, since thou may not see it fit to satisfy me with *length of Days*, O satisfy me without it, and if I may not have the first part of that promise made out, let me have the second, which will do incomparably better, for if I *see thy Salvation*, although mine Eyes should be surprizingly for ever shut unto the light of Life, I shall reckon I have nothing more to seek, and I shall never complain, that Life which had Days and Years for its measure, is changed for that which knows none.

Fourthly, They who come to age may be said to go to a Grave, but they who die in the strength of Life, are reckoned to be cut off, and thou knows cutting is painful, and terrible. If such an eminent Saint as *Hzekiab*, lamented *cutting off in midst of Days*, *Isa. 38. 10*. what may be expected of me? and if *Heman* under apprehensions of such a thing, goes out to so great a length in his Mourning, *Lord, I am cut off from thy hand whom thou hast no more in Memory, even free among the dead like those that lye in the Grave, wilt thou shew Wonders to the dead, &c.* *Psal. 88*. I hope thou wilt pity my fears, and forgive my great averseness to such a call, if thou should order it for me.

Fifthly, Lord I would gladly have praised thee in time, with these that are in the land of the living, but if

if thou deny me the occasion, *Shall the dead praise thee? shall they rise that they may bless thee?* Psal. 30. 9. *shall thy loving kindness be told in the Grave, or in the land of deep forgetfulness?* Psal. 88. 10, 11, 12. there is no Light there for reading the Book of thy Mercy, and there is no tongue there to speak of, or to God, *but the living, the living he shall praise thee,* Isa. 38. 19. as I thought to have done: if I am not allowed to stay and do it, O! let me have that despairing like question, *shall the dead rise and bless thee?* answered, They shall, and thou among them shalt do it to better purpose, after the instruments of thy speaking, and singing God's praise are refined, by being laid in dust, until a Resurrection day when the Charge shall be given, *awake and sing ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of Herbs,* Isa. 26. 19.

CASE XXI. *Fear of dying under a Spiritual Cloud.*

BUT I am afraid that though I may be safe in my dying work, I shall not have a comfortable and savoury of going from the Stage of Life, and to sit under a *Cloud* is a great disadvantage; if this be thy Case (and under it is a very allowable concern) go to the throne of Grace, and plead after this manner.

First, Lord, I acknowledge, If I should perish altogether, it is no more than Justice, and if I be Saved, it is even more than Mercy, although I should not have any of the first fruits of it here, by hope and joy in the valley of the shadow of Death, so naturally dark, I have so many sad provocations to charge myself with, that I cannot wonder though thou should shake me strangely, and humble me to the very dust, ere I get away; yet I come to thee and plead it is not only my comfort, but my duty, to be in case to die full of the hope of Glory.

Secondly, Thou knows I should give a Testimony for God upon many Occasions, and there is none fitter than a day of Death, when my words would take deepest impressions, and be best believed, and I would gladly leave something that might be to the Glory of thy Name, when I am gone, O how infinitely should I
count

count myself obliged to thee, if I might contribute any thing, for raising a good report of the precious new and living way of Salvation through Jesus, and making any Soul fall in love with it, and I am sure, the most graceless Sinner might take some hope, if he could see such a person as me greatly owned of God in such an extremity, and the humble when he sees it, also would be glad, *Psal.* 69. 32. may I urge this? I have done little for thee in Life, may I make up the many defects in this matter, by doing thee some piece of remarkable service at death *

Thirdly, It is more than a single Death, to die in darkness and uncertainly about the everlasting Concern, and to be at that, die I must, and how, I cannot tell, is the most cutting thought a waking and jealous Soul can have, and whoever can endure to go from this Life, not knowing where they shall land, whether at the fair Haven, the peaceful Harbour, or in horror and desperation? I must see if possible, safe ground to light upon before I leap, the fear of falling upon the dark and Iron shore that will dash me in pieces Eternally, seems even to hasten death that I am so afraid to look upon.

Fourthly, I have prayed for thy Comforts many times before now, but I never needed them so much; it must be a strong Cordial, that can bear up under the sensible and pressing arreists of Death. Death's passage is such a darksome dismal-like veil, that I dare not think of entering into it, without thy being with me in a most signal manner, and thy *Pastoral stays and Rod to comfort me.* *Psal.* 23. 4. Nothing less can reconcile me to death, and make me give it its just Name, calling that last enemy a friend, *1 Cor.* 3. 22. if ever thou was a friend, shew it in the time of need, this I think shall be among my

* I mind to have heard of two men, the one very pious and the other graceless, the former died with very little hope and joy, the other turning a penitent died with much of both; a Reason was given, because the pious man had given Testimony for God by his life, the other was to give it at his death.

my last requests, may I even plead upon this account thou would answer it.

Fifthly, I had an eye to this, that I might die comfortably, in almost all my Supplications which I have been making to thee upon knees of Soul and Body, and if I be denied it, what ground shall I have for suspecting all I have done, as rejected of God, especially in such a plight of jealousy, as my Soul is now in? must I die and this conclusion in my heart or mouth, all my poor endeavours I had some expectations to get good of, are now gone, and what shall I look to, when Faith and Prayer, which I thought were proven reliefs to my Soul in distress, are now to me as the waters that Fail?

C A S E XXII. *Fear of Death's being the entry to a worse.*

BUT it may be thou art afraid of worse than this, even that thou shalt not be found to have an interest in the *Everlasting Covenant*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. when thou comes to dying, for thou dare not assert it now, and thou cannot tell what thou shalt do, if thy case be no better then, than it is at present: upon this go and lay the sense of thy trouble before God, in such Arguments as these:

First, O what a hard thing shall it be for me to be pinched between these two, an unwillingness to go, and an inability to stay! shall it ever come to that, die I must, ready or unready.

Secondly, Wilt thou pull me away from Time, and all the enjoyments of it, without preparing me some way, by helping me to a resignation to thyself, which I can never attain without hope of Glory, this would be like a rending of the Caul of the Heart, which looks to be an act of heavy indignation, and can be constructed by me nothing less than a dragging of a malefactor to the Prison, and from thence to the Execution.

Thirdly, I think I can appeal to thee, it is not so much my love to all the desirable things of Time, that makes me so unwilling to think of dying, as my doubtfulness of my Eternal state; and I find a far greater difficulty in attaining the comfortable hope of Heaven than

than to get the heart deadened to all the pleasures of Life ; but thou knows when I have both to wrestle with the Love of a Natural Life, and the uncertainty about my lodging, when I yeild it up, I have much ado to be willing to venture all at one cast.

Fourthly, Yet I shall say although it be a kind of death to me, to think of death without evidences for Heaven, be pleased to hold me busy by the calls of approaching death upon the one Ear, and of a doubting Conscience upon the other, *Heb. 2. 15.* rather as let me securely pass over, and lose the day of my opportunities, although I would be glad to be holden busy in a more kindly way, if thou would allow it.

Fifthly, O accustom me to make Death familiar to myself, by frequent thinking of it, and thereby less terrible : shall I be content to meet with it in a surprize ? and it will be so, if I should live a Thousand years without expectation of it : a surprize makes a cross twice double. It's sad policy to turn the back on this last and great Enemy, because I see not how to have assurance in the day of my engaging with him, it gives me a kind of peace too dear bought, by rendering him more dangerous.

Sixthly, How can I be so unwilling to meet with death upon any account ? is not this the great errand of my coming into the world, to die well ? and indeed it is little worth our while to Live, if it were not to make ready to die.

Seventhly, There is a great number of the most Noble Spirits in the World before us, that have gone thro' Death, some with more some with less ease, is there none of these whom I can say, as *Thomas* did of *Lazarus*, *let us go die with him*, *John 11. 16.* and that I may do so, why am I not at the pains to get my doubtfulness, the great obstacle removed.

Eighthly, What though it be a dark and dismal-like passage, it opens a way to a sight of God, *whom no man may see and live*, *Exod. 33. 28.* but many have died and seen him, mortality cannot bear that sight, eyes inlightened with Glory can : help me in view of this to a noble Ambition of having that darkness done away, that makes

makes the Porch of Glory to be of such a dismal aspect.

CASE XXIII. *Savouring the things of Time too much.*

BUT Alas! that I find thy poor world smells like Paradise to my Nostrils, which is a sad sign, I am of the Earth Earthly, and I would gladly have my affections deadened to Time, before I be taken from it. Go and plead with God thus:

First, Lord thou hast made my Soul with an appetite after immortality, and infiniteness, which seems to cry out even when I am not sensible of it, God or nothing, Christ or else I am undone, it cannot be supposed a Soul can live on dust and shadows, the unseen vital substance must be committed to thee that art *Substance, Light and Life* to it.

Secondly, Why does thou bring me under so many disappointments, if it be not to deaden me by degrees to the things that are here, some there are whom thou sweetly draws, enticing them on to Glory, by the benign influences both of Grace and Providence beating warmly on their heads, others thou must drive, and I am one of these, if thou should hound me to Heaven, what matter so be that it prove effectual, though every thing should seem to have a commission to be unkind, but if it prove not effectual, I have poor upmaking for all the troubles of a wearisome Lot.

Thirdly, Thou hast said thou hast a Water, *that whosoever drinks of he shall thirst no more*, John 4. 14. O! lead me to the Spring whence that does flow, and if thou would do it, it would cure me of a burning disease, of which I languish and die. I have heard the report of it, but the Faith of God's Elect only can give credit to it: let me have as much of this, as can shew me where and what it is, and as much love as shall make me restless, till I set out more vigorously for attaining to it.

Fourthly, Are Meat and Drink, and Sleep, Fame, Honour, Gold and Faces of Dust worthy to keep me from a God? O what is all this empty World, that we should so desire to live for ever with Flesh and Blood!

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Perswade me that my troubles grow out of the very stock of my Comforts, and thou needs do no more to render me miserable, but make use of my pleasures against me, by blasting them: for when affections are lively to the World, to suffer the loss of it is like the rending of the flesh from the bone, but deadened Flesh is not sensible, and a Mortified Soul would feel little pain in that which Nature counts unsufferable.

C A S E XXIV. *Spiritual in all manner of Conversation,*

IF it be thy trouble that thou hast a great difficulty, to keep up lively impressions of God, in midst of the business or Diversions of this Life, Plead after this manner.

First, I desire to lament it as a great evidence of Spiritual Dulness and Stupidity, that though thou be the sense and meaning of all the Creatures in my view, they being all Letters of thy Name, yet I can read so little of God out of them; this is as if I were still turning over Letters and Syllables of the fairest Books, and never able to make a word of sense out of them all.

Secondly, It shews that there is something worse than even stupidity in my Nature, a woful disposition making an Opposition perpetually between God and his Creatures: the Creatures were all formed to be useful in helping Man up to the thoughts and Enjoyment of their and his Lord, and should be used as much; but I place them between thee and me, so as I cannot see through them, and I rob thee of thy due, which I Sacrilegiously bestow upon them.

Thirdly, Help me to consider, it were a far wiser course to be tracing up the Streams of created Enjoyments, till I come to the Spring of all, and there sit down with a contentful acquiescence, in that which the most refined Creatures cannot allow. If I find any pleasure here, may I argue, there must be infinitely more in that Source, from which it flows? and it's a pity to drink of the streams so muddy, so bitter and so shallow, while the Fountain is so near: and if I find disappointments, may I argue myself upwards toward thee; since
thou

thou makest all Cisterns run dry, I must have Refreshment in the Well of Life that is with God. *Psal.* 36. 9.

Fourthly, Thy Creatures and thy Providences are more constant means of Correspondence with thee, than even thine Ordinances, which I have but at sometimes, whereas these meet me every place, and every Case, and cry aloud that I should get up, and come away to him, they always bear witness for. O! what Advantage might I make of this, if I should never see the light of this Sun, but I should also think, it shews me far beyond itself, even to that Fair Original Glory, that is in the Maker of it, and if I should never see my common Provisions of Meat and Drink, but they should point out the hand that gives them.

Fifthly, When shall I be so Spiritual, as to find every place like a Chapel for secret stolen and sweet Devotion, and every Stone and Pile of Grass in the Field, like a Book for helping my Meditations of thee, I know that it is not according to Occasions the heart is, but according to the Heart Occasions are, a Spiritual Soul will ravish an Opportunity from the croud of Business, and see it fairly lying in the way, when others have no thought of it; but a carnal heart finds the loud noise of this World, Diversions and Throngs even at a Communion Table. O then! may my Heart be above my Hand, whatever my hand be about, and may I do all my Ordinary Actions so, as to refer them all to God, and thereby put an Excellency on them, by making them all services done to thee, and may all the Creatures seem to want their lustre and their relish, except withal, I have something of thee.

C A S E XXV. *Affured Hope of Glory.*

BUT it may be thou art greatly concerned to have a well grounded Assurance of an interest in Heaven, as a perpetual Companion of all thy Duties and Trials, and indeed thou art allowed to Plead for it, yea Commanded to attain it, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. as a main duty of Religion, for the neglect of which thou wilt not

not be able to answer ; upon this thou may make thy Applications to the Throne of Grace, so.

First, The want of Evidences for Heaven oft-times mars my giving thee Praise, or at least makes it very flat and dull : for when I suspect that this Work shall not hold out eternally with me, but that Death shall make me change my Note to Despair and Howling, my Soul cannot get up to that Elevation which becomes, and which I would gladly set my Praises unto.

Secondly, It cannot but make me proceed in all my Duties very faintly, when I know not but my next step may be utter Ruin to me ; whereas if thou would be pleased to give me so much Light, as would shew Salvation always before me, I would set out with Resolution and Vigour, knowing my Labour should not be in vain, and should be ashamed to grudge Pains in Duty, or Pain in Affliction, while Promising to myself *a weighty Crown of Glory*, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Thirdly, All who ever attained unto a patient continuance in well doing, *did look for Glory and Immortality*, Rom. 2. 7. and they who counted *their light Affliction for a moment, not to be compared to the Glory to be revealed, did look at things not seen, and Eternal, and not at what was seen*, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. I cannot think to be unsure at both hands, to cast myself out of the enjoyments I might have in life, and have nothing to look to beyond it, 1 Cor. 15. 19. Nature must have something to fill its eye and stay itself upon, and my Resolution for thee will starve, if Hope go not out frequently to the invisible Regions of Light, to Forrage, and bring home Provisions for restoring and keeping it fresh and Vigorous.

Fourthly, Were not all these who are raised to Glory now, such as I am, they were at first strangers to God, and great Grace prevented, and made them become thine in the best of Bonds, and even when their Hearts were taken in by thee, many an unworthy and unthankful neglect of God have they been guilty of ; and many a dark and dismal hour have they gone through, what by inward, what by outward Trials in their Case, many a Heartless Heart have they had in serving of thee,

thee, and Complaints have taken up most of their time, when they came to pray, yea even to praise, but all these things are over with them now, and they forget their Misery, and remember it as Waters pass away, old things are done away.

Fifthly, I am ready to reckon a great deal of sinfulness lies in Sins of Commission, and no doubt there does, without so much being troubled for sins of Omission, the want of solid Faith, lively Affection, and longing for Heaven, where the joy of thy Presence is unconceivable, but I desire to think now there is a greater sinfulness in such Omissions, than in some Commissions called worse, even in a frightenedness at Death, a loathing to go out of the Valley of Sin and Sorrows, which shews how little esteem I have for the light and life that is above, and this is greatly owing to my want of a Comfortable Assurance of such a state.

Sixthly, But how shall I attain to a constant Faith of Assurance of Heaven, who have so small Degrees of the Faith of its Reality, if Faith the Foundation stone be not fairly laid, my Assurance must either be an Impossibility, or a night dream and a Shadow. O if I could exercise a frequent and solid Belief, that there are many in Glory before me, I think it would both put me upon longing to be with these Noble Souls, and also help to humble Expectations of seeing myself so happy.

C A S E XXVI. *For Provisions of Life.*

BUT because we are commanded to be careful in nothing, *but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication to make known our Requests unto God*, Phil. 4. 6. and so we may bring all our Temporal concerns before him, if thy Case be that of outward pinching wants; thou may go to him, and deal after this manner.

First, Lord, I have heard it belongs to thy Kingdom, *that thou opens thy hand Liberally, and satisfies the desire of every living thing*, Psal. 145. 16. and I am sure however unworthy I am, I will be found within the
Denomination

Denomination of things, that have Life from thee, and need to have something to maintain it.

Secondly, Thou art pleased to hear *the young Ravens, when they seek their Meat from God, and the Lyons when they cry to thee*, Psal. 147. 9. Job 38, 39. 41. if such natural Prayers as theirs may be answered, may not such as I make for me and mine, although they should not have Grace running through them, be taken notice of.

Thirdly, Thou hast commanded Man to draw out his Soul to the Hungry, and that he bring the Poor that are cast out to his House, *I/a.* 58. 7. 10. and there is a Compassion thou places a great value upon, O! wilt thou be behind with thy Creatures, does thou not press such excellent qualifications, not only from thy Word, but from thy Example, *and if thou hast Commanded us to be Merciful even as thou art so*, Luke 6. 36. may not I use the freedom with thee, to Plead, shew thy Mercy as man is bidden shew his, and oft-times has done it.

Fourthly, Thou hast ordered Poverty always to be in the World, for an occasion of thy demonstrating a more immediate Providence toward them that are under it, and its more to thine Honour, to supply wants by less visible Channels of Conveyance, than to keep People always easy by obvious outward means, thine answering my need shall get acknowledgement from me, greater than what a Tract of Prosperity would make: Because the more immediate Mercies are, there is the more of God, and less of the Creature to be seen in them, and this makes them justly unto all thine the sweeter.

Fifthly, Thou hast ordered Poverty to be a perpetual excitement unto dependence on, and requesting of thee, but if want be not supplied, it will miss and mar the design of it, for the Spirit will sink by too long waiting on without an answer, and I will want grounds of confirming by belief, that thou art the helper of the Fatherless, which my Faith very much needs, and the Spirit will be Tempted to exasperation against him, of whom I desired and expected to make a good report.

Sixthly,

Sixtly, Thou may plead with our Lord; As thou went through the Lot of Man's Misery, thou experienced that of want, to such a degree, that oft-times thou knew not where to lay thine Head, or what to Eat, *Math.* 8. 20. thou was obliged to seek a draught of Water from the Woman of *Samaria*, *Joh.* 4. 7. and take subsistence that other Women contributed for, *Luke.* 8. 3. and work a wonder for paying thy Tribute, *Mat.* 17. 27. if thou commanded *Israel* to pity Strangers, because themselves were once such, *Deut.* 10. 19. and they knew the Heart of a Stranger, *Exod.* 23. 9. I would urge humbly that same Argument with thee.

Seventhly, When thou wast upon Earth thou had *Compassion on the Multitude*, and wrought a Miracle for Bread to them, *Mar.* 8. 2. I seek not so great a thing as a Miracle, only that thou would give Commission that I may have to *Eat and give thee praise*, *Psal.* 22. 29. and I am told that the Court and Glory thou art exalted unto does not change thy manner toward Man.

Eighthly, Thou argued against thy Disciples being solicitous about things of the World, by telling them that *the Lillies grow without Labour, and their Glory was greater than Solomon's, and if God cloath the Herbs of the Field, which to Day are, and to Morrow are cast into the Oven, how much more will he do for his People*, *Mat.* 6. 28, 30. I desire to plead, thou provides Nourishment and Beauty to the *Lillies*, wilt thou not provide Subsistence to me, who have a rational Soul! and I would inforce this Argument, if thou do so much for the Flowers of the Field, which are made only for the use of Man, what wilt thou do for the Creature itself, for whom they are made.

CASE XXVII. *Lamentation over the Confusions and Bloodbeds of the World.*

BUT as Religion is the most generous thing in the World, thou who has acquaintance with it, wilt not confine thyself narrowly to thine own Concernments, this were to be wrapt up within thyself, which thy Regard both to the Interests of God, and Mankind, can never suffer, and therefore thou looks abroad through the Christian World, to seek out what may

need thy Compassion, and thy Prayers, and thou findest the melancholy aspect of *War, Confusions* and *Bloodshed* perpetually offering to thy View, and indeed these cannot but make rueful impressions on the Hearts of all, but an unnatural set of Men, who love to have a living on the Miseries and Deaths of others, *Psal. 68. 30.* Thou considers not only the loss of so many Subjects of each Kingdom in the Field of Battle, but that many Souls are snatcht away unready, unto a woful Eternity, and also that even those who are not Witnesses of that Destruction, which slays openly at Noon-day, feel the weight of it many ways at home: go and plead, in compassion to thy Brethren, to this purpose,

First, O Lord, was it not promised that in the good and peaceful days of the Gospel, the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid, the Calf and the young Lyon together, and a little Child shall lead them, and the Lyon shall eat Straw like the Ox, and the sucking Child shall play on the ball of the Asp, and the weaned Child shall put his hand on the Cockatrice Den, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all thy holy Mountain, when the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea, Isa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. and all this to import unto us that the Mediator's Kingdom should be full of Peace, and his gracious Dispensation in the Gospel should dispose Men of the most furious and ravenous Tempers, unto Harmlessness; and is not the Gospel called *the Gospel of Peace*, *Rom. 10. 17.* upon this very account, as well as that it proclaims *Peace* betwixt thee and Men. O! what a melancholy Consideration is it, that Christianity has been able to justify itself so little, to the Conviction of the Heathen and Mahometan World, to be of thee, by the Reformation of the Hearts and Ways of it's Professors, and particularly by that Love, which much of the Spirit of the Gospel consists in, how much would it contribute to the Glory of it, if thou would perswade Men to *beat their Swords into Plow-shares, and their Spears into Pruning Hooks*, *Isa. 2. 4. Mic. 4. 3.*

Secondly, Thou hast a long time testified against the Atheism and Immorality of the Nations of Europe, by bloody and raging Wars especially, taking Vengeance
on

on some by them, and warning others, but thou sees how little Effect this has upon them: for they look like Persons that have got *the Cup of the Lord's Fury* put into their Hand, that they may *drink and be mad*, Jer. 25. 16. Be pleased to pour out thy Spirit for Reformation, when other Means will not do: one day's pouring out of this would work more Humiliation and Repentance, than the pouring out all the *Blood* of a Nation can do.

Thirdly, I desire to Remember before thee, Thou said long ago, *I will not henceforth curse the Earth more for Man's sake, for the Imagination of Man's Heart is continually Evil from his Youth*, Gen. 8. 21. and made that an Argument of Pity, which might have been an Argument of unrelenting Fury; because thou saw that Judgment might break him in pieces, but could never melt him, it was another thing that would reform him, even waiting and striving by the Spirit more effectually; Therefore thou said *Psal. 78. 38. thou would not stir up all thy Wrath*. Take such Compassion on us, and say kindly, Mercy will do more in one day upon the Guilty and Miserable World, than Wrath has done these many years, and I will make a Tryal of it.

Fourthly, It becomes us to lament the *Bloodsheds* of our Brethren, who are gone out from us, for we have a hand in them, our Sins have sent them to the Field, and provoked thee to pour out upon them *the Fury of his Anger and the strength of Battle*, Isa. 42. 25. and therefore we'll beg of thee that thou would be their Strength in the Day of their Engagement, and as soon as possible, bring to an end that sad state of Things, *Wherein every Battle is with Confusion and Noise, and every Garment rolled in Blood*, Isa. 9. 5.

Fifthly, O! Be pleased to make the issue of the desolating Wars a compensation for the great loss of *Blood* they have cost, by an Honourable and well established *Peace*, that shall secure the Liberties and the Religion at home, and not only secure, but restore Religion abroad, and let none of our Government ever be willing to make a *Peace* either unworthy of so great effusion of Blood, or so many Victories thou hast been pleased to bestow on us, lest they take upon them the

guilt of all that Blood, by making it, as far as they can, be shed in vain ; and let never the ceasing of Wars abroad be so unworthily acknowledged unto thee, as to turn the Seed of Wars among ourselves. Let us never spare Blood that may be necessarily shed abroad, that it may be ingloriously spilt at home.

C A S E XXVIII. *The Misery of the Heathen World.*

BUT it may be it strikes thy Soul with a more afflicting Sense, to see what a universal and profound Darkness the most part of the habitable Earth, as to God and the things of God, lyes under ; not so much as the objective sufficiency of outward means for Salvation being allowed them, this cannot but be sometimes matter of thy Astonishment, obliging thee to cry out, *O ! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out*, Rom. 11. 33. that tho' all the World is to be call'd before the Judgment Seat, yet the most part of that World cannot know what way it's possible to be approved in the great day ; and sometimes of thy Compassion that so many precious and noble Souls of the Heathen World should be lost, who might probably make a far better improvement of the offers of Salvation, than these who have them. Upon this go and represent before God,

First, What a sad matter it is that so many Souls should be murdered in the dark, *destroyed from Morning to Evening, and perishing for ever without any regarding it*, Job. 4. 20. If this work so much upon the compassion of our Nature, shall it not be noticed and helped by a Mercy that's infinite !

Secondly, Let me plead also upon the head of thine Interest, O what a pity is it, that God who made the World should have so little of its Service, and the Devil who ruined Mankind, should be so willingly and expensively adored by almost all, that he should have so much to justify that usurped Title, *the God of this World*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. and seem thereby to defeat in a great measure both the design of thy Creation, and of thy greater kindness, in thy offering to restore the fallen World !

Thirdly, I have heard *the Glory of a King lyes much in the multitude of his People*, Prov. 14. 28. and may not I plead,

plead, it would greatly contribute to thine, that thy followers were very numerous. O bring many unto thy Kingdom of Grace, and let the time be hastened, if it be possible, when *the King of Nations and King of Saints*, Jer. 10. 7. Rev. 15. 4. shall be Titles of one Signification, *all the Nations of the World becoming the Kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rev. 11. 15. Psal. 86. 9. Rom. 14. 11. Let every Man become a Monument of thy Glory, and every Tongue may be bestowed on the Acclamations of thy Praise.

Fourthly, Can we think that the promises of the glorious Days that should come upon the World, under the Gospel, are all fulfilled in their full extent as yet? we persuade ourselves, that there are greater things to be done, than we have seen, for the poor desolate parts of the World. *Have regard unto thy Covenant, for the dark places of the Earth, are full of the Habitations of Cruelty*, Psal. 74. 20. the Covenant thou made with thy Son: When shall the Day dawn, when that shall be yet more accomplished, thou said of him, *It is a light thing that thou should be my Servant, only to raise up the Tribe of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation to the ends of the Earth, and many Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall Worship*, Isa. 49. 6, 7, 9, 12. him whom Man despised, and the Nations abhorred, that he may say to the Prisoners, go forth, and to them that are in Darkness, show yourselves, Behold these shall come from far, and lo these from the North, and from the West, and these from the Land of Sinim.

When shall that Day dawn, *When the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the Earth, and say, surely our Fathers have inherited Lies, Vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall we make Gods to ourselves, and they are no Gods?* Jer. 16. 19, 20. *And the Kings of the Earth shall bring their Glory, and Honour unto thy Church, and the Nations of them which are saved shall walk in the Light of it*, Rev. 21. 24. Hasten the Accomplishment fully of that, Isa. 35. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. *The Wilderness and the solitary Place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoyce, and blossom as the Rose. The Glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, and the Excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the Glory of the Lord, and the Excellency*

lency of our God. That, the Eyes of the Blind may be opened, and the Ears of the deaf unstopped. The lame Man may leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb sing : because of the Waters breaking forth in the Wilderness, and Streams in the Desert.

When shall it be fulfilled, that Men shall sing to the Lord a new Song, and his Praise to the ends of the Earth, that they may give Glory to the Lord, and his Praise may be declared in the Islands, *Isai. 42. 10, 12.* And from the rising of the Sun to the going down thereof, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles : and in every place Incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure Offering. *Mal. 1. 11.*

Thou said, *All the ends of the World shall remember and turn to the Lord : and all the kindreds of the Nations shall Worship before him ; for the Kingdom is the Lord's and he is Governor among the Nations, Psal. 22. 28, 29.* The Heathens shall fear thy Name, and the Kings of the Earth thy Glory, *Psal. 102. 15.* Is not the time come yet, when we may see the Angel flying in the midst of Heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them who dwell on the Earth, to every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People ? Fear God and give Glory to him, for the hour of his Judgment is come, *Rev. 14. 6, 7, 8.* And may the other Angel proclaim at the same time, *BABYLON is fallen, is fallen. May the shaking of the Nations, Hag. 2. 6, 7.* be in order to this thy remarkable coming to the perishing World.

CASE XXIX. *The withered State of Religion.*

UPON That sad Consideration that Religion is at so low an Ebb in the World, even among the Professors of it this Day, by reason of a strange Spirit of Slumber upon the better Sort, and a Judicial Blindness and Hardness upon the worse, to that degree of an absolute Insensibility of all the precious things they perpetually handle, Go and deal with God after this manner.

First, Lord, I Bless thee that thou hast come under such a sweet Relation to thy People to be called King of Saints, Thou art King of Nations, as having an absolute Dominion of Property over all the World, and a
Dominion

Dominion of Sovereignty over all thy Creatures that are Rational, but O! what a great difference there is between these two? That awful Word *King of Nations* makes but a Chain of Iron and Force, whereby the Creatures are all constrained to bow, but *King of Saints* has in it a Chain of Gold and Love, and O! how sweet is it to be thine in the best of Bonds, Thy Name *King of Nations* may raise great thoughts in us, for that thou can make every Insect an Executioner of thine Anger when thou pleases, But *King of Saints* can raise far more delightful Meditations of thee.

Secondly, This precious Title puts me in mind both of thy People's Duties, and their Priviledges, their Duty of Subjection to thee as their Lord, and if Mortal Kings have been own'd by some to have an absolute Power over them, shall we begrudge it to thee, to whom, and whom only, of right it belongs? and when we are commanded to forego comfortable Enjoyments, or suffer sore troubles, shall we not pay that Imposition upon all the good things we have, chearfully, and that not only out of the Sense of the Right thou hast over us, but also out of thy condescendency? As in this I see our Subjection, so we see our Interest in thy defence, in thy Provision, in thy comfortable Presence thou wilt give thy People, who wilt make all thy Subjects thy Companions.

Thirdly, Does not the Honour of a King arise very much from the prosperity of his Subjects, and would it not greatly advance thy Honour, that it goes well with thine, that they all in some measure look answerable to the King they belong to, and whom they serve? Even mortal Princes have boasted, that they pursued the Happiness of their People, by all the Arts of Government; Wilt thou be short of thy Creatures? Surely not. And when thy People find thee always disposed to make them Happy, by thy Dominion of *Grace*, they will be before thee perpetually, by Prayers and Acclamations, let the Crown on the head of the precious Redeemer flourish.

Fourthly, Acts of greatest bounty and generosity become Kings most of all Persons, and we have heard thou loves to act greatly like thyself, and if small instan-

ces of Liberality oft-times dishonour Royal Persons, what shall we expect of thee, but great and manifold allowances of gracious influences, when we are so low?

Fifthly, The deadness of Professors in the matters of *Religion*, wofully gives occasion to the Enemies, to suspect their Reality, and tempts them to speak insolently, and weigh out the violence of their Hands against them: Whereas the power of *Godliness* would give a noble Testimony for it, and might have influence to perswade many Strangers unto thy Way, who cannot be wrought upon by Reasoning; O! help thy People to plead for God by their Practice, as much as by their Words, and to Pray and Believe, and Live and Suffer, and Hope and Repent their Enemies down.

CASE XXX. *The necessity of Government's owning Religion.*

THOU cannot but see how necessary to the happiness of a Nation, and the flourishing of *Religion*, a good Government is, and that thou art upon all accounts obliged to beg earnestly of the Lord, he would dispose Rulers to a Spirit of Wisdom, Religion, Justice and Generosity towards their People; And thou ought to plead the more hard for this, because it is a very rare thing to see the shields of the Earth, who are his, acting for him. And particularly, plead with an Eye to the maintaining of a *Protestant Sovereign*, on the Throne of the Dominions to which thou belongs, when so many are violently inclined to have one, that is sworn to the abhorred and abandoned darkness and tyranny of *Rome*.

First, Lord, may our Sovereigns govern us, so as to raise an Emulation in the most consummated Governments on Earth, and may every one of them be a Pattern to him who succeeds, which he shall justly have the Ambition to follow, and may all the Subjects always feel themselves under a necessity to transmit their Loyalty to Posterity, by the sense they have of their Goodness, being not only bound to them by the Ties of Birth and Conscience, but of most cordial Affection: may Virtue and Religion rule so illustriously in the Persons of our *Rulers*, as to circulate upon these who are nearest them, and from them, upon all the Nation, with an universal Influence.

Secondly,

Secondly, Keep our Nation always under the Perswasion of it, that it is essential to the Preservation of the *Protestant Religion*, that one who loves it, should sit upon the Throne; and that we cannot be safe in the hands of one, whose Conscience and Hope of Heaven binds him to ruin either our *Religion* or our *Lives*, and how unbecoming and unworthy it is for *Protestant Nations* to give their Power to one, who is devoted to give all his unto the *Beast of Rome*.

Thirdly, Let us never be suffered to forget how the *British Prince* and the *Romish Priest* conspired to make a dreadful Work with all our *Liberties* and *Religion*, our precious Things, at once, when promised the assistance of the Fiery Forces of a neighbouring Monarch, who had destroyed all in his own Dominions, who would not carry the *Mark of the Beast*, Revel. 13. 16, 17. and how seasonably thou stepped in, and disappointed them, so as Men of Wisdom could not find their heads, nor Men of Light their Lands, Psal. 76. 5. and men of Blood refused to Fight. And let the Remembrance of these things for ever keep back our Nations from tempting God again, by laying all at the Feet of one, who is at the disposal of the greatest Enemy on Earth.

Fourthly, Help our Rulers always to Remember, that as they are intrusted with our Liberties, so they are with our Religion; and if they shall by Neglect, or by Surrender lose it, they shall make a sad Account for it in the Day of Judgment, and Posterity shall execrate their Memory, and many Curse them through everlasting Ages, when they shall answer for the Damnation of many a Soul, beside that of their own, which is too much for any to bear.

Fifthly, May we not Plead, Thou would fulfil the Promises of Good Days of Government, spoken of long ago, when thou said, thou would make the Officers Peace, and the Exactors Righteousness, and that Violence should no more be heard in thy Land, Wasting and Destruction within its Borders; but thy People should call their Walls Salvation, and their Gates Praise, Isai. 60. 17, 18. and 49. 23. And Kings shall be their Nursing Fathers, and their Queens their Nursing Mothers, they shall bow down to thy Church with their Faces toward the Earth, and lick up the dust of her Feet.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, We have been greatly obliged unto thee for raising up to us a *Foreigner*, calling a righteous Man from the East unto his foot, *Isai.* 41. 2. to be our help, when, there was no help to be found at home; this is a Mercy we desire, neither to forget, nor slightly remember; but to entail the Memory of it to Generations to come. And we bless thee for directing our Government to make choice of one in the *Protestant Line*, to Support what he wonderfully Restored. O! may we find him as friendly to *Religion and Liberty*, as the other was: And may he place as much his glory in encouraging Good Men, and breaking Tyranny and Oppression. May *Higher Germany* be as useful to *Baitain* in furnishing us with a Preserver, as the *Lower* was in giving us a Deliverer; and may we have that Heir, of our Crown; not falling unto such Circumstances as shall need his restoring; and may his Management, when he comes to the Government, be such, as shall make a perpetual Argument of Friendship between his Country and ours.

Seventhly, O Lord, may all the Rulers of these Kingdoms be perpetually imprest with a Sense of the baseness of Oppression and Persecution, and how little these contribute to the Advancement of Religion, when raised on the Account of it, and how unworthy it is of them, to harass, or embroil their hands in the Blood of their Brethren; for that they cannot think, after their Manner in all Points of Religion, or will not dissemble, when they cannot; and let Cruelty in such matters be so Odious to every Person within the Dominions, as none may have the Confidence to be guilty of it, or if any have, he may be shunned as a Monster.

CASE XXXI. *The Decay of Religion in our Lands.*

BUT It may be (and indeed thou hast too much Reason for it) thou looks upon Religion as in a very declining State within the Land of thy Nativity, And that both upon the Account of the little Life and Power of Godliness, to be seen in the way of its Professors, and also the threatening Aspect of Things in the Government, which seems to take unkind Measures, bearing too much Appearance of a Tendency, to open a Door of Liberty, to those who would gladly have a Deliverance

Deliverance to work Abominations, *Jer. 7. 10.* Upon this Head, thou may go and make Application after this Manner.

First, We desire to bless thee, That ever there was a Line of the Scripture, promising Mercy to our far off Places in the World ; That ever thou said to thy Son, *The outmost Ends of the Earth should be his Possession*, *Psal. 2. 8.* And, *he should be thy Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, *Isa. 42. 1. 4.* And that *the Isles should wait for his Law*, That *he should be the Confidence of all the Ends of the Earth, and those who are afar off upon the Sea*, *Psal. 65. 5.* May we not upon these Grounds request, thou would not suffer the Boundings of the Blessed Redeemer's Charter to be intrenched upon.

Secondly, Lord, as thou hast chosen our Nation above many others, so thou hast erected thy Kingdom in it, with the Glorious Ensigns of long continued Combats and Sufferings, and with peculiar Priviledges of Purity in the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of thy House : Help us to Consecrate so inestimable a Blessing, to the Glory of thy Great Name, the perpetual Celebration of thy Wonders, the Reinforcement of our decaying Obedience unto thee, and to the Remembrance of them who went before us, so as we may recal unto our Practice, and Imitation, the Holiness and Zeal of their Lives, whereby they did so nobly Justify their Profession, and exalt to the highest pitch of Evidence, the Power of the Gospel.

Thirdly, Thou hast been pleased to bring us into the Bond of thy Covenant, *Ezek. 20. 37.* and make us become thine, with uplifted Hands and Hearts, *causing us pass under the Rod*, in order thereto, our Land with more Solemnity than in almost any Nation beside, hath at several Times dedicated itself unto thee, and we have heard thou art not only the Faithful God, *Who keeps Covenant with them who Love thee, and keep thy Commands*, *Neh. 1. 5.* *Dan. 9. 4.* but the God who keeps Covenant, and shows Mercy to them, who have often broken with Thee, Therefore, According to the Word which thou hast Covenanted with thy People, when thou brought them out of Egypt, Let thy Spirit remain among us, *Hag. 2. 5.* Remember, O Lord, Break not Covenant with

us, Jer. 14. 21. call to mind for us, *thy Covenant, and repeat according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, when we are brought low for our Iniquities*, Psal. 106. 43, 45. *We are the Children of the Covenant, which thou hast made*, Acts 3. 25. However unworthy, let it never be Matter of shame, in the reckoning of any of our Land, that we were Honoured to enter into a *Covenant* with God, and let us never be a Disgrace unto our Solemn Engagements unto thee.

Fourthly, Help us to consider, how unfaithful we shall be found to thee, to our Predecessors, and our Posterity, if we shall not be careful to transmit Religion, with its Lustre and Advantages, as far as we can, *to the Generations to come*, Psal. 78. 4, 5. is being a Trust committed unto us, that it may be handed down to others, and thereby when our Ruins disclaim to keep up thy Praises, they may become perpetual, by being propagated; and our Fathers having wrestled for Ordinances, with an eye to late Posterity, let us be resolved, *We will not bide what we have heard and known, and our Fathers have told us from their Children, shewing to the Generation to come, the Praises of the Lord, and his Strength, and his wonderful Works that he hath done*, † although we should be untender of them, as our own: Help to remember they are theirs, and how unnaturally base it is to squander away such a noble Treasure, as Religion is, that our Children may demand from us.

Our Predecessors prayed oft, and earnestly, not only for the Continuation of Gospel Ordinances in Purity, but in their Power, their greater Glory; let us see the Fruit of their *Praying, and Covenanting* for so excellent Purposes, graciously made unto us.

† Psal. 72. 17. His Name shall be as a Son to continue his Father's Name for ever. Or shall be sonned *Filiabitur*, probably to import one Age shall tell of it to another, and so it shall be carried through Generations by natural Propagation so, Psal. 45. 4. One Generation shall praise thy Works to another: and he promises the Father to the Son shall shew forth God's Truth, Isa. 38. 19.



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